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THE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES.

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THE PLAYS

OF

EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE FROM THE

TEXT OF PALEY

BY

EDWARD P. COLERIDGE, B.A.

ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ANDROMACHE.
MAID.
CHORUS OF PHTHIAN WOMEN.
HERMIONE.
MENELAUS.
MOLOSSUS.
PELEUS.
NURSE OF HERMIONE.
ORESTES.
MESSENGER.
THETIS.

SCENE.—Before the temple of Thetis in Thessaly.

ANDROMACHE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PAGE

TRANSLATION, WITH NOTES, OF TEN PLAYS, IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER :—

ANDROMACHE 1
ELECTRA 41
THE BACCHANTES 87
HECUBA 131
HERACLES MAD 171
THE PHŒNICIAN MAIDENS 217
ORESTES 275
IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURI 337
IPHIGENIA AT AULIS 389
THE CYCLOPS 445

ANDROMACHE.

AND. O city of Thebes,[1] glory of Asia, whence on a day I came to Priam's princely home with many a rich and costly thing in my dower, affianced unto Hector to be the mother of his children, I Andromache, envied name in days of yore, but now of all women [that have been or yet shall be] the most unfortunate[2]; for I have lived to see my husband Hector slain by Achilles, and the babe Astyanax, whom I bore my lord, hurled from the towering battlements, when the Hellenes sacked our Trojan home; and I myself am come to Hellas as a slave, though I was esteemed a daughter of a race most free, given to Neoptolemus that island-prince, and set apart for him as his special prize from the spoils of Troy. And here I dwell upon the boundaries of Phthia and Pharsalia's town, where Thetis erst, the goddess of the sea, abode with Peleus apart from the world, avoiding the throng of men; wherefore the folk of Thessaly call it the sacred place of Thetis, in honour of the goddess's marriage. Here dwells the son of Achilles and suffers Peleus still to rule Pharsalia, not wishing to assume the sceptre while the old man lives. Within these halls have I born a boy to the son of Achilles, my master. Now aforetime for all my misery I ever had a hope to lead me on, that, if my child were safe, I might find some help and protection from my woes; but

[1] *i.e.* Thebes in Cilicia.

[2] Reading εἴ τις . . . δυστυχεστάτη. Line 7 is probably corrupt in some way, or spurious; possibly the result of *two* ancient readings. Lascaris gave οὔτις . . . δυστυχεστέρα.

since my lord in scorn of his bondmaid's charms hath wedded that Spartan Hermione, I am tormented by her most cruelly; for she saith that I by secret enchantment am making her barren and distasteful to her husband, and that I design to take her place in this house, ousting her the rightful mistress by force; whereas I at first submitted against my will and now have resigned my place; be almighty Zeus my witness that[1] it was not of my own free will I became her rival!

But I cannot convince her, and she longs to kill me, and her father Menelaus is an accomplice in this. E'en now is he within, arrived from Sparta for this very purpose, while I in terror am come to take up a position here in the shrine of Thetis adjoining the house, if haply it may save me from death; for Peleus and his descendants hold it in honour as a symbol of his marriage with the Nereid. My only son am I secretly conveying to a neighbour's house in fear for his life. For his sire stands not by my side to lend his aid and cannot avail his child at all, being absent in the land of Delphi, where he is offering recompense to Loxias for the madness he committed, when on a day he went to Pytho and demanded of Phœbus satisfaction[2] for his father's death,[3] if haply his prayer might avert those past sins and win for him the god's goodwill hereafter.

MAID. Mistress mine, be sure I do not hesitate to call thee by that name, seeing that I thought it thy right in thine own house also, when we dwelt in Troy-land; as I was ever thy friend and thy husband's while yet he was alive, so now have I come with strange tidings, in terror lest any of our masters learn hereof but still out of pity for thee; for Menelaus and his daughter are forming dire plots against thee, whereof thou must beware.

[1] Nauck regards this line as spurious.

[2] Reading *οὔ 'κτίνειν*, Hermann's correction for *οὔ τίνει* or *κτείνει*.

[3] Neoptolemus demanded satisfaction for his father's death because Apollo directed the fatal arrow of Paris which killed Achilles.

AND. Ah! kind companion of my bondage, for such thou art to her, who, erst thy queen, is now sunk in misery; what are they doing? What new schemes are they devising in their eagerness to take away my wretched life?

MAID. Alas! poor lady, they intend to slay thy son, whom thou hast privily conveyed from out the house.

AND. Ah me! Has she[1] heard that my babe was put out of her reach? Who told her? Woe is me! how utterly undone!

MAID. I know not, but thus much of their schemes I heard myself; and Menelaus has left the house to fetch him.

AND. Then am I lost; ah, my child! those vultures twain will take and slay thee; while he who is called thy father lingers still in Delphi.

MAID. True, for had he been here thou wouldst not have fared so hardly, I am sure; but, as it is, thou art friendless.

AND. Have no tidings come of the possible arrival of Peleus?

MAID. He is too old to help thee if he came.

AND. And yet I sent for him more than once.

MAID. Surely thou dost not suppose that any of thy messengers heed thee?

AND. Why should they? Wilt thou then go for me?

MAID. How shall I explain my long absence from the house?

AND. Thou art a woman; thou canst invent a hundred ways.

MAID. There is a risk, for Hermione keeps no careless guard.

AND. Dost look to that? Thou art disowning thy friends in distress.

MAID. Not so; never taunt me with that. I will go, for

[1] *i.e.* Hermione.

of a truth a woman and a slave is not of much account, e'en if aught befall me.

AND. Go then, while I will tell to heaven the lengthy tale of lamentation, mourning, and weeping, that has ever been my hard lot; for 'tis woman's way to delight in present misfortunes even to keeping them always on her tongue and lips. But I have many reasons, not merely one for tears,—my city's fall, my Hector's death, the hardness of the lot to which I am bound, since I fell on slavery's evil days undeservedly. 'Tis never right to call a son of man happy, till thou hast seen his end, to judge from the way he passes it how he will descend to that other world.

'Twas no bride Paris took with him to the towers of Ilium, but a curse to his bed when he brought Helen to her bower. For her sake, O Troy, did eager warriors, sailing from Hellas in a thousand ships, capture and make thee a prey to fire and sword; and the son of sea-born Thetis mounted on his chariot dragged my husband Hector round the walls, ah woe is me! while I was hurried from my chamber to the beach, with slavery's hateful pall upon me. And many a tear I shed as I left my city, my bridal bower, and my husband in the dust. Woe, woe is me! why should I prolong my life, to serve Hermione? Her cruelty it is that drives me hither to the image of the goddess to throw my suppliant arms about it, melting to tears as doth a spring that gushes from the rock.

CHO. Lady, thus keeping thy weary station without pause upon the floor of Thetis' shrine, Phthian though I am, to thee a daughter of Asia I come, to see if I can devise some remedy for these perplexing troubles, which have involved thee and Hermione in fell discord, because to thy sorrow thou sharest with her the love of Achilles' son. Recognize thy position, weigh the present evil into the which thou art come. Thou art a Trojan captive; thy rival is thy mistress, a true-born daughter of Sparta. Leave

then this home of sacrifice, the shrine of our sea-goddess. How can it avail thee to waste thy comeliness and disfigure it by weeping by reason of a mistress's harsh usage? Might will prevail against thee; why vainly toil in thy feebleness? Come, quit the bright sanctuary of the Nereid divine. Recognize that thou art in bondage on a foreign soil, in a strange city, where thou seest none of all thy friends, luckless lady, cast on evil days. Yea, I did pity thee most truly, Trojan dame, when thou camest to this house; but from fear of my mistress I hold my peace, albeit I sympathize with thee, lest she, whom Zeus's daughter bore, discover[1] my good will toward thee.

HER. With a crown of golden workmanship upon my head and about my body this embroidered robe am I come hither; no presents these I wear from the palace of Achilles or Peleus, but gifts my father Menelaus gave me together with a sumptuous dower from Sparta in Laconia, to insure me freedom of speech. Such is my answer to you[2]; but as for thee, slave and captive, thou wouldst fain oust me and secure this palace for thyself, and thanks to thy enchantment I am hated by my husband; thou it is that hast made my womb barren and cheated my hopes; for Asia's daughters have clever heads for such villainy; yet will I check thee therefrom, nor shall this temple of the Nereid avail thee aught, no! neither its altar or shrine, but thou shalt die. But if or god or man should haply wish to save thee, thou must atone for thy proud thoughts of happier days now past by humbling thyself and crouching prostrate at my knees, by sweeping out my halls, and by learning, as thou sprinklest water from a golden ewer, where thou now art. Here is no Hector, no Priam with his gold, but a city of Hellas. Yet thou, miserable woman, hast gone so far in wantonness that thou canst lay thee down with the son of the very man that slew thy husband, and bear children to

[1] εὔρῃ. So Hermann for ἴδῃ. [2] *i.e.* the Chorus.

the murderer. Such is all the race of barbarians; father and daughter, mother and son, sister and brother mate together; the nearest and dearest stain their path with each other's blood, and no law restrains such horrors. Bring not these crimes amongst us, for here we count it shame that one man should have the control of two wives, and men are content to turn their attention to one lawful love, that is, all who care to live an honourable life.

CHO. Women are by nature[1] somewhat jealous, and do ever show the keenest hate to rivals in their love.

AND. Ah! well-a-day! Youth is a bane to mortals, in every case, that is, where a man embraces injustice in his early days. Now I am afraid that my being a slave will prevent thee listening to me in spite of many a just plea, or if I win my case, I fear I may be damaged on this very ground, for the high and mighty cannot brook refuting arguments from their inferiors; still I will not be convicted of betraying my own cause. Tell me, proud young wife, what assurance can make me confident of wresting from thee thy lawful lord? Is it that Laconia's capital yields to Phrygia? is it that my fortune outstrips thine? or that in me thou seest a free woman? Am I so elated by my youth, my full healthy figure, the extent of my city, the number of my friends that I wish to supplant thee in thy home? Is my purpose to take thy place and rear myself a race of slaves, mere appendages to my misery? or, supposing thou bear no children, will any one endure that sons of mine should rule o'er Phthia? Ah no! there is the love that Hellas bears me, both for Hector's sake and for my own humble rank forsooth, that never knew a queen's estate in Troy. 'Tis not my sorcery that makes thy husband hate thee, nay, but thy own failure to prove thyself his help-meet.[2] Herein lies

[1] Nauck, on the authority of Stobaeus, reads θηλείας φρενός for θηλειῶν ἔφυ.

[2] This line is regarded by Nauck as an interpolation.

love's only charm; 'tis not beauty, lady, but virtuous acts that win our husbands' hearts. And though it gall thee to be told so, albeit thy city in Laconia is no doubt a mighty fact, yet thou findest no place for his Scyros, displaying wealth 'midst poverty and setting Menelaus above Achilles: and that is what alienates thy lord. Take heed; for a woman, though bestowed upon a worthless husband, must be with him content, and ne'er advance presumptuous claims. Suppose thou hadst wedded a prince of Thrace, the land of flood and melting snow, where one lord shares his affections with a host of wives, wouldst thou have slain them? If so, thou wouldst have set a stigma of insatiate lust on all our sex. A shameful charge! And yet herein we suffer more than men, though we make a good stand against it. Ah! my dear lord Hector, for thy sake would I e'en brook a rival, if ever Cypris led thee astray, and oft in days gone by I held thy bastard babes to my own breast, to spare thee any cause for grief. By this course I bound my husband to me by virtue's chains, whereas thou wilt never so much as let the drops of dew from heaven above settle on thy lord, in thy jealous fear.[1] Oh! seek not to surpass thy mother in hankering after men, for 'tis well that all wise children should avoid the habits of such evil mothers.

CHO. Mistress mine, be persuaded to come to terms with her, as far as readily comes within thy power.

HER. Why this haughty tone, this bandying of words, as if, forsooth, thou, not I, wert the virtuous wife?

AND. Thy present claims at any rate give thee small title thereto.

HER. Woman, may my bosom never harbour such ideas as thine!

AND. Thou art young to speak on so delicate a subject.

[1] *i.e.* she is so suspicious that he can scarcely come and go as he pleases, at early morn.

HER. As for thee, thou dost not speak thereof, but, as thou canst, dost put it into action against me.

AND. Canst thou not conceal thy pangs of jealousy?

HER. What! doth not every woman put this first of all?

AND. Yes, if her experiences are happy; otherwise, there is no honour in speaking of them.

HER. Barbarians' laws are not a standard for our city.

AND. Alike in Asia and in Hellas infamy attends base actions.

Her. Clever, clever quibbler! yet die thou must and shalt.

AND. Dost see the image of Thetis with her eye upon thee?

HER. A bitter foe to thy country because of the death of Achilles.

AND. 'Twas not I that slew him, but Helen that mother of thine.

HER. Pray, is it thy intention to probe my wounds yet deeper?

AND. Behold, I am dumb, my lips are closed.

HER. Tell me that which was my only reason for coming hither.

AND. No! all I tell thee is, thou hast less wisdom than thou needest.

HER. Wilt thou leave these hallowed precincts of the sea-goddess?

AND. Yes, if I am not to die for it; otherwise, I never will.

HER. Since that is thy resolve, I shall not even wait my lord's return.

AND. Nor yet will I, at any rate ere that, surrender to thee.

HER. I will bring fire to bear on thee, and pay no heed to thy entreaties.

AND. Kindle thy blaze then; the gods will witness it.

HER. And make thy flesh to writhe by cruel wounds.

AND. Begin thy butchery, stain the altar of the goddess with blood, for she will visit thy iniquity.

HER. Barbarian creature, hardened in impudence, wilt thou brave death itself? Still will I find speedy means to make thee quit this seat of thy free-will; such a bait have I to lure thee with. But I will hide my meaning, which the event itself shall soon declare. Yes, keep thy seat, for I will make thee rise, though molten lead is holding thee there, before Achilles' son, thy trusted champion, arrive.

[*Exit* HERMIONE.

AND. My trusted champion, yes! how strange it is, that, though some god hath devised cures for mortals against the venom of reptiles, no man ever yet hath discovered aught to cure a woman's venom, which is far worse than viper's sting or scorching flame; so terrible a curse are we to mankind.

CHO. Ah! what sorrows did the son of Zeus and Maia herald, in the day he came to Ida's glen, guiding that fair young trio of goddesses, all girded for the fray in bitter rivalry about their beauty, to the shepherd's fold, where dwelt the youthful herdsman all alone by the hearth of his lonely hut. Soon as they reached the wooded glen, in gushing mountain springs they bathed[1] their dazzling skin, then sought the son of Priam, comparing their rival charms in more than rancorous phrase.[2] But Cypris won the day by her deceitful promises, sweet-sounding words, but fraught with ruthless overthrow to Phrygia's hapless town and Ilium's towers. Would God his mother had smitten him a cruel death-blow[3] on the head before he made his home on Ida's slopes, in the hour Cassandra, standing by the holy bay-tree, cried out, "Slay him, for he will bring most grievous bane on Priam's town." To every prince she went, to every elder sued for the babe's destruction. Ah! had they listened,

[1] *νίψαν*. So Hermann. *αἰγλᾶντα*, Musgrave. *ἐν 'ροαῖς*, Aldus.

[2] Reading *ὑπερβολαῖς λόγων δυσφρόνων*. Hermann places a stop after *Πριαμίδαν*, and then reads *ὑπερβολαῖς λόγων δ' εὐφρόνων*.

[3] *μόρον*, Hermann's correction for *Πάριν*.

Ilium's daughters ne'er had felt the yoke of slavery, and[1] thou, lady, hadst been established in the royal palace[2]; and Hellas had been freed of all the anguish she suffered during[3] those ten long years her sons went wandering, spear in hand, around the walls of Troy; brides had never been left desolate, nor hoary fathers childless.

MEN. Behold I bring thy son with me, whom thou didst steal away to a neighbour's house without my daughter's knowledge. Thou wert so sure this image of the goddess would protect thee and those who hid him, but thou hast not proved clever enough for Menelaus. And so if thou refuse to leave thy station here, he shall be slain instead of thee. Wherefore weigh it well: wilt die thyself, or see him slain for the sin whereof thou art guilty against me and my daughter?

AND. O fame, fame! full many a man ere now of no account hast thou to high estate exalted. Those, indeed, who truly have a fair repute, I count blest; but those who get it by false pretences, I will never allow have aught but the accidental appearance of wisdom. Thou for instance, caitiff that thou art, didst thou ever wrest Troy from Priam with thy picked troops of Hellenes? thou that hast raised such a storm, at the word of thy daughter, a mere child, and hast entered the lists with a poor captive; unworthy I count thee of Troy's capture, and Troy still more disgraced by thy victory. Those who only in appearance are men of sense make an outward show, but inwardly resemble the common herd, save it be in wealth, which is their chiefest strength.[4]

Come now, Menelaus, let us discuss this argument.

[1] *σύ τ' ἄν*. So Pflugk for *οὔτε σὺ*.

[2] *i.e.* as queen in Troy after Priam's death.

[3] Hermann's emendation *ὅτ'* for *οὓς*.

[4] Lines 330-332 are condemned by Dobree and bracketed by Nauck as spurious.

Suppose I am slain[1] by thy daughter, and she work her will on me, yet can she never escape the pollution of murder, and public opinion will make thee too an accomplice in this deed of blood, for thy share in the business must needs implicate thee. But even supposing I escape death myself, will ye kill my child? Even then, how will his father brook the murder of his child? Troy has no such coward's tale to tell of him; nay, he will follow duty's call; his actions will prove him a worthy scion of Peleus and Achilles. Thy daughter will he thrust forth from his house; and what wilt thou say when seeking to betroth her to another? wilt say her virtue made her leave a worthless lord? Nay, that will be false. Who then will wed her? wilt thou keep her without a husband in thy halls, grown grey in widowhood? Unhappy wretch! dost not see the flood-gates of trouble opening wide for thee? How many a wrong against a wife wouldst thou prefer thy daughter to have found to suffering what I now describe? We ought not on trifling grounds to promote serious mischief; nor should men, if we women are so deadly a curse, bring their nature down to our level. No! if, as thy daughter asserts, I am practising sorcery against her and making her barren, right willingly will I, without any crouching at altars, submit in my own person to the penalty that lies in her husband's hands, seeing that I am no less chargeable with injuring him if I make him childless. This is my case; but for thee, there is one thing[2] I fear in thy disposition; it was a quarrel for a woman that really induced thee to destroy poor Ilium's town.

Cho. Thou hast said too much for a woman speaking to

[1] *τίθνηκα δή*, Reiske.

[2] *i.e.* I am afraid, even if I prove the malice and falseness of her charges against me, you will not punish her, for your partiality and weakness in such cases is well known.

men; *that* discretion hath shot away its last shaft from thy soul's quiver.[1]

MEN. Woman, these are petty matters, unworthy, as thou sayest, of my despotic sway, unworthy too of Hellas. Yet mark this well; his special fancy of the hour is of more moment to a man than Troy's capture. I then have set myself to help my daughter because I consider her loss of a wife's rights a grave matter; for whatever else a woman suffers is secondary to this; if she loses her husband's love she loses her life therewith. Now, as it is right Neoptolemus should rule my slaves, so my friends and I should have control of his; for friends, if they be really friends, keep nothing to themselves, but have all in common. So if I wait for the absent instead of making the best arrangement I can at once of my affairs, I show weakness, not wisdom. Arise then, leave the goddess's shrine, for by thy death this child escapeth his, whereas, if thou refuse to die, I will slay him; for one of you twain must perish.

AND. Ah me! 'tis a bitter lot thou art offering about my life; whether I take it or not I am equally unfortunate. Attend to me, thou who for a trifling cause art committing an awful crime. Why art thou bent on slaying me? What reason hast thou? What city have I betrayed? Which of thy children was ever slain by me? What house have I fired? I was forced to be my master's concubine; and spite of that wilt thou slay me, not him who is to blame, passing by the cause and hurrying to the inevitable result? Ah me! my sorrows! Woe for my hapless country! How cruel my fate! Why had I to be a mother too and take upon me a double load of suffering? Yet why do I mourn the past, and o'er the present never shed[2] a tear or compute its griefs? I

[1] *i.e.* there is no more to be said on that subject. The suggestion by Paley of ἐξεróξευσας is very plausible.

[2] The word ἐξικμάζω which strictly means "to extract the moisture" is here explained by the Schol. as = δακρύω. There is no parallel to

that saw Hector butchered and dragged behind the chariot, and Ilium, piteous sight! one sheet of flame, while I was haled away by the hair of my head to the Argive ships in slavery, and on my arrival in Phthia was assigned to Hector's murderer as his mistress. What pleasure then has life for me? Whither am I to turn my gaze? to the present or the past? My babe alone was left me, the light of my life; and him these ministers of death would slay. No! they shall not, if my poor life can save him; for if he be saved, hope in him lives on, while to me 'twere shame to refuse to die for my son. Lo! here I leave the altar and give myself into your hands, to cut or stab, to bind or hang. Ah! my child, to Hades now thy mother passes to save thy dear life. Yet if thou escape thy doom, remember me, my sufferings and my death, and tell thy father how I fared, with fond caress and streaming eye and arms thrown round his neck. Ah! yes, his children are to every man as his own soul; and[1] whoso sneers at this through inexperience, though he suffers less anguish, yet tastes the bitter in his cup of bliss.

Cho. Thy tale with pity fills me; for every man alike, stranger though he be, feels pity for another's distress. Menelaus, 'tis thy duty to reconcile thy daughter and this captive, giving her a respite from sorrow.

Men. Ho! sirrahs, catch me this woman; hold her fast; for 'tis no welcome story she will have to hear. It was to make thee leave the holy altar of the goddess that I held thy child's death before thy eyes, and so induced thee to give thyself up to me to die. So stands thy case, be well assured; but as for this child, my daughter shall decide

this usage, and the word, though left in the text by most editors is, as Dindorf remarks, almost certainly corrupt, due perhaps to a gloss, such as ἐξετάζω for ἐξιχνεύω. (Cf. Paley's note *ad loc.*)

[1] *i.e.* the childless man may laugh at the father for his fondness; he may even escape some pain and annoyance from having no family, but still in his heart he feels a void which nothing else can fill.

whether she will slay him or no. Get thee hence into the house, and there learn to bridle thy insolence in speaking to the free, slave that thou art.

AND. Alas! thou hast by treachery beguiled me; I was deceived.

MEN. Proclaim it to the world; I do not deny it.

AND. Is this counted cleverness amongst you who dwell by the Eurotas?

MEN. Yes, and amongst Trojans too, that those who suffer should retaliate.

AND. Thinkest thou God's hand is shortened, and that thou wilt not be punished?

MEN. Whene'er that comes, I am ready to bear it. But thy life will I have.

AND. Wilt likewise slay this tender chick, whom thou hast snatched from 'neath my wing?

MEN. Not I, but I will give him to my daughter to slay if she will.

AND. Ah me! why not begin my mourning then for thee, my child?

MEN. Of a truth 'tis no very sure hope that he has left.

AND. O citizens of Sparta, the bane of all the race of men, schemers of guile, and masters in lying, devisers of evil plots, with crooked minds and tortuous methods and ne'er one honest thought, 'tis wrong that ye should thrive in Hellas. What crime is wanting in your list? How rife is murder with you! How covetous ye are! One word upon your lips, another in your heart, this is what men always find with you. Perdition catch ye! Still death is not so grievous, as[1] thou thinkest, to me. No! for my life ended in the day that hapless Troy was destroyed with my lord, that glorious warrior, whose spear oft made a coward like thee quit the field and seek thy ship. But now against a woman hast thou

[1] Hermann alters ὡς into ὃς, *i.e.* "the death you have determined to inflict;" but the change seems unnecessary.

displayed the terrors of thy panoply, my would-be murderer. Strike then! for this my tongue shall never flatter thee or that daughter of thine. For though thou wert of great account in Sparta, why so was I in Troy. And if I am now in sorry plight, presume not thou on this; thou too mayst be so yet.

CHO. Never, oh! never will I commend rival wives or sons[1] of different mothers, a cause of strife, of bitterness, and grief in every house. I would have a husband content with one wife whose rights he shareth with no other. Not even in states is dual monarchy better to bear than undivided rule; it only doubles burdens and causes faction amongst the citizens. Often too will the Muse sow strife 'twixt rivals[2] in the art of minstrelsy. Again, when strong winds are drifting mariners, the divided counsel of the wise is not conducive to steering, and their collective wisdom has less weight than the inferior intelligence of the single man who has sole authority;[3] for this is the essence of power alike in house and state, whene'er men care to find the proper moment. This Spartan, the daughter of the great chief Menelaus, proves this; for she hath kindled hot fury against a rival, and is bent on slaying the hapless Trojan maid and her child to further her bitter quarrel. 'Tis a murder gods and laws and kindness all forbid. Ah! lady, retribution for this deed will visit thee yet.

But lo! before the house I see those two united souls, condemned to die. Alas! for thee, poor lady, and for thee, unhappy child, who art dying on account of thy mother's marriage, though thou hast no share therein and canst not be blamed by the royal house.

[1] *ἀμφιμάτορας κόρους* is explained as meaning "brothers by different mothers but the same father."

[2] Reading *τόνων θ' ὕμνου συνεργάταιν δυοῖν* for *τεκτόνοιν θ' ὕμνοιν ἐργάταιν*. The emendation was due to Hermann (*τόνων*) and Duport.

[3] Such is Paley's interpretation of this very difficult piece of Greek. He reads *διδύμα γνώμα* (nom.) with a colon after the latter word; and *ὃ δύνασις*, the correction of Hermann for *ἁ*.

AND. Behold me journeying on the downward path, my hands so tightly bound with cords that they bleed.

MOL. O mother, mother mine! I too share thy downward path, nestling 'neath thy wing.

AND. A cruel sacrifice! ye rulers of Phthia!

MOL. Come, father! succour those thou lovest.

AND. Rest[1] there, my babe, my darling! on thy mother's bosom, e'en in death and in the grave.

MOL. Ah, woe is me! what will become of me and thee too, mother mine?

MEN. Away, to the world below! from hostile towers ye came, the pair of you; two different causes necessitate your deaths; my sentence takes away thy life, and my daughter Hermione's requires his; for it would be the height of folly to leave our foemen's sons, when we might kill them and remove the danger from our house.

AND. O husband mine! I would I had thy strong arm and spear to aid me, son of Priam.

MOL. Ah, woe is me! what spell can I now find to turn death's stroke aside?

AND. Embrace thy master's knees, my child, and pray to him.

MOL. Spare, O spare my life, kind master!

AND. Mine eyes are wet with tears, which trickle down my cheeks, as doth a sunless spring from a smooth rock. Ah me!

MOL. What remedy, alas! can I provide me 'gainst my ills?

MEN. Why fall at my knees in supplication? hard as the rock and deaf as the wave am I. My own friends have I helped, but for thee have I no tie of affection; for verily it cost me a great part of my life to capture Troy and thy mother; so thou shalt reap the fruit thereof and into Hades' halls descend.

[1] κεῖσο δή, Nauck.

CHO. Behold! I see Peleus drawing nigh; with aged step he hasteth hither.

PEL. [*calling out as he comes in sight.*] What means this? I ask you and your executioner; why is the palace in an uproar? give a reason; what mean your lawless machinations? Menelaus, hold thy hand. Seek not to outrun justice. [*To his attendant.*] Forward! faster, faster! for this matter, methinks, admits of no delay; now if ever would I fain[1] resume the vigour of my youth. First however will I breathe new life into this captive, being to her as the breeze that blows a ship before the wind. Tell me, by what right have they pinioned thine arms and are dragging thee and thy child away? like a ewe with her lamb art thou led to the slaughter, while I and thy lord were far away.

AND. Behold them that are haling me and my child to death, e'en as thou seest, aged prince. Why should I tell thee? For not by one urgent summons alone but by countless messengers have I sent for thee. No doubt thou knowest by hearsay of the strife in this house with this man's daughter, and the reason of my ruin. So now they have torn and are dragging me from the altar of Thetis, the goddess of thy chiefest adoration and the mother of thy gallant son, without any proper trial, yea, and without waiting for my absent master; because, forsooth, they knew my defencelessness and my child's, whom they mean to slay with me his hapless mother, though he has done no harm. But to thee, O sire, I make my supplication, prostrate at thy knees, though my hand cannot touch thy friendly beard; save me, I adjure thee, reverend sir, or to thy shame and my sorrow shall we be slain.

PEL. Loose her bonds, I say, ere some one rue it; untie her folded hands.

[1] Herwerden conjectures *μενοινῶ* for *μ' ἐπαινῶ*, which is certainly a strange expression.

MEN. I forbid it, for besides[1] being a match for thee, I have a far better right to her.

PEL. What! art thou come hither to set my house in order? Art not content with ruling thy Spartans?

MEN. She is my captive; I took her from Troy.

PEL. Aye, but my son's son received her as his prize.

MEN. Is not all I have his, and all his mine?

PEL. For good, but not evil ends; and surely not for murderous violence.

MEN. Never shalt thou wrest her from my grasp.

PEL. With this good staff I'll stain thy head with blood!

MEN. Just touch me and see! Approach one step!

PEL. What! shalt thou rank with men? chief of cowards, son of cowards! What right hast thou to any place 'mongst men? Thou who didst let a Phrygian rob thee of thy wife, leaving thy home without bolt or guard,[2] as if forsooth the cursed woman thou hadst there was a model of virtue. No! a Spartan maid could not be chaste, e'en if she would, who leaves her home and bares her limbs and lets her robe float free, to share with youths their races and their sports,—customs I cannot away with. Is it any wonder then that ye fail to educate your women in virtue? Helen might have asked thee this, seeing that she said goodbye to thy affection and tripped off with her young gallant to a foreign land. And yet for her sake thou didst marshal all the hosts of Hellas and lead them to Ilium, whereas thou shouldst have shown thy loathing for her by refusing to stir a spear, once thou hadst found her false; yea, thou shouldst have let her stay there, and even paid a price to save ever having her back again. But that was not at all the way thy thoughts were turned; wherefore many a brave life hast thou ended, and many an aged mother hast thou left childless in her home, and grey-haired sires of gallant sons hast reft. Of that sad band am I a member,

[1] Reading *τἄλλα τ'* with Nauck for *γ' ἄλλος*.

[2] Reading *ἄῤῥουρα*, Lenting.

seeing in thee Achilles' murderer like a malignant fiend; for thou and thou alone hast returned from Troy without a scratch, bringing back thy splendid weapons in their splendid cases just as they went. As for me, I ever told that amorous boy to form no alliance with thee nor take unto his home an evil mother's child; for daughters bear the marks of their mothers' ill-repute into their new homes. Wherefore, ye wooers, take heed to this my warning: "Choose the daughter of a good mother." And more than this, with what wanton insult didst thou treat thy brother, bidding him sacrifice his daughter in his simpleness! So fearful wast thou of losing thy worthless wife. Then after capturing Troy,—for thither too will I accompany thee,—thou didst not slay that woman, when she was in thy power; but as soon as thine eyes caught sight of her breast, thy sword was dropped and thou didst take her kisses, fondling the shameless traitress, too weak to stem thy hot desire, thou caitiff wretch! Yet spite of all thou art the man to come and work havoc in my grandson's halls when he is absent, seeking to slay with all indignity a poor weak woman and her babe; but that babe shall one day make thee and thy daughter in thy home rue it, e'en though his birth be trebly base. Yea, for oft ere now hath seed, sown on barren soil, prevailed o'er rich deep tilth, and many a bastard has proved a better man than children better born. Take thy daughter hence with thee! Far better is it for mortals to have a poor honest man either as married kin or friend than a wealthy knave; but as for thee, thou art a thing of naught.

CHO. The tongue from trifling causes contrives to breed great strife 'mongst men; wherefore are the wise most careful not to bring about a quarrel with their friends.

MEN. Why,[1] pray, should one call these old men wise, or those who once had a reputation in Hellas for being so? when thou, the great Peleus, [son of a famous father, con-

[1] Porson reads *τίς δῆτ' ἂν εἴποι.*

nected with me by marriage,[1]] employest language disgraceful to thyself and abusive of me because of a barbarian woman, though thou shouldst have banished her far[2] beyond the streams of Nile or Phasis, and ever encouraged me; seeing that she comes from Asia's continent where fell so many of the sons of Hellas, victims to the spear; and likewise because she shared in the spilling of thy son's blood; for[3] Paris who slew thy son Achilles, was brother to Hector, whose wife she was. And dost *thou* enter the same abode with her, and deign to let her share thy board, and suffer her to rear her brood of vipers in thy house? But I, after all this foresight for thee, old man, and myself, am to have her torn from my clutches for wishing to slay her. Yet come now, for there is no disgrace in arguing the matter out; suppose my daughter has no child, while this woman's sons grow up, wilt thou set them up to rule the land of Phthia, barbarians born and bred to lord it over Hellenes? Am I then so void of sense because I hate injustice, and thou so full of cleverness? Consider[4] yet another point; say thou hadst given a daughter of thine to some citizen, and hadst then seen her thus treated, wouldst thou have sat looking on in silence? I trow not. Dost thou then for a foreigner rail thus at thy nearest friends? Again, thou mayst say, husband and wife have an equally strong case if she is wronged by him, and similarly if he find her guilty of indiscretion in his house; yet while he has ample powers in his own hands, she depends on parents and friends for her case. Surely then I am right in helping my own kin! Thou art in thy dotage; for thou wilt do me more good by speaking of my generalship than by concealing it. Helen's trouble was not of her own choosing, but sent by

[1] Nauck regards this as an interpolation, not improbably.

[2] Reading τῆλ', (Reiske).

[3] Lines 655-656 are rejected by Nauck.

[4] Lines 668-677 are regarded by Hirzel as not being the work of Euripides. Nauck incloses them in brackets.

heaven, and it proved a great benefit to Hellas; her sons, till then untried in war or arms, turned to deeds of prowess, and it is experience which teaches man all he knows. I showed my wisdom in refraining from slaying my wife, directly I caught sight of her. Would that thou too hadst ne'er slain Phocus![1] All this I bring before thee in pure good-will, not from anger. But if thou resent it, thy tongue may wag till it ache, yet shall I gain by prudent forethought.

CHO. Cease now from idle words, 'twere better far, for fear ye both alike go wrong.

PEL. Alas! what evil customs now prevail in Hellas! Whene'er the host sets up a trophy o'er the foe, men no more consider this the work of those who really toiled, but the general gets the credit for it. Now he was but one among ten thousand others to brandish his spear; he only did the work of one; but yet he wins more praise than they. Again, as magistrates in all the grandeur of office they scorn the common folk, though they are naught themselves; whereas those others are ten thousand times more wise than they, if daring combine with judgment. Even so thou and thy brother, exalted by the toilsome efforts of others, now take your seats in all the swollen pride of Trojan fame and Trojan generalship. But I will teach thee henceforth to consider Idaean Paris a foe less terrible[2] than Peleus, unless forthwith thou pack from this roof, thou and thy childless daughter too, whom my own true son will hale through his halls by the hair of her head; for her barrenness will not let her endure fruitfulness in others, because she has no children herself. Still if she is unlucky in the matter of offspring, is that a reason why we should be left childless? Begone! ye varlets, let her go! I will soon see if anyone will hinder me from loosing her hands. [*To* ANDROMACHE.] Arise;

[1] The half-brother of Peleus and Telamon, slain by them out of jealousy.

[2] Reading *μὴ κρείσσω*, as Paley proposed, instead of *μείζω* or *ἥσσω*.

these trembling hands of mine will untie the twisted thongs that bind thee. Out on thee, coward! is this how thou hast galled her wrists? Didst think thou wert lashing up a lion or bull? or wert afraid she would snatch a sword and defend herself against thee? Come, child, nestle to thy mother's arms; help me loose her bonds; I will yet rear thee in Phthia to be their bitter foe. If your reputation for prowess and the battles ye have fought were taken from you Spartans, in all else, be very sure, you have not your inferiors.

CHO. The race of old men practises no restraint; and their testiness makes it hard to check them.

MEN. Thou art only too ready to rush into abuse; while, as for me, I came to Phthia by constraint and have therefore no intention either of doing or suffering anything mean. Now must I return home, for I have no time to waste; for there is a city not so very far from Sparta, which aforetime was friendly but now is hostile; against her will I march with my army and bring her into subjection. And when I have arranged that matter as I wish, I will return; and face to face with my son-in-law I will give my version of the story and hear his. And if he punish her, and for the future she exercise self-control, she shall find me do the like; but if he storm, I'll storm as well; and[1] every act of mine shall be a reflex of his own. As for thy babbling, I can bear it easily; for, like to a shadow as thou art,[2] thy voice is all thou hast, and thou art powerless to do aught but talk.

[*Exit* MENELAUS.

PEL. Lead on, my child, safe beneath my sheltering

[1] Paley's suggestion to omit this line as possibly spurious owing to the repetition of *ἀντιλήψεται*, and to read *θυμουμένη* in the preceding line, would clear up the ambiguity as to whether Andromache or Neoptolemus is meant as the subject of *ᾗ σώφρων*.

[2] Reading with Hermann and Dindorf, *σκιᾷ ἀντίστοιχος ὢν*. Another reading is *σκιὰ — ὡς*, *i.e.* "like the shadow on a dial exactly opposite the sun." (Paley.)

wing, and thou too, poor lady; for thou art come into a quiet haven after the rude storm.

AND. Heaven reward thee and all thy race, old sire, for having saved my child and me his hapless mother! Only beware lest they fall upon us twain in some lonely spot upon the road and force me from thee, when they see thy age, my weakness, and this child's tender years; take heed to this, that we be not a second time made captive, after escaping now.

PEL. Forbear such words, prompted by a woman's cowardice. Go on thy way; who will lay a finger on you? Methinks he will do it to his cost. For by heaven's grace I rule o'er many a knight and spearman bold in my kingdom of Phthia; yea, and myself can still stand straight, no bent old man as thou dost think; such a fellow as that a mere look from me will put to flight in spite of my years. For e'en an old man, be he brave, is worth a host of raw youths; for what avails a fine figure if a man is a coward?

[*Exeunt* PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, *and* MOLOSSUS.

CHO. Oh! to have never been born, or sprung from noble sires, the heir to mansions richly stored; for if aught untoward e'er befall, there is no lack of champions for sons of noble parents, and there is honour and glory for them when they are proclaimed scions of illustrious lines; time detracts not from the legacy these good men leave, but the light of their goodness still burns on when they are dead. Better is it not to win a discreditable victory, than to make justice miscarry by an invidious exercise of power; for such a victory, though men think it sweet for the moment, grows barren in time and comes very near being a family reproach. This is the life I commend, this the life I set before me as my ideal, to exercise no authority beyond what is right either in the marriage-chamber or in the state. O aged son of Æacus! now am I sure that thou wert with the Lapithae, wielding thy famous spear, when they fought the Centaurs;

and on Argo's deck didst pass the cheerless strait beyond the sea-beat Symplegades on her voyage of note; and when in days long gone the son of Zeus spread slaughter round Troy's famous town, thou too didst share his triumphant return to Europe.

NUR. Alas! good friends, what a succession of troubles is to-day provided us! My mistress Hermione within the house, deserted by her father and in remorse for her monstrous deed in plotting the death of Andromache and her child, is bent on dying; for she is afraid her husband will in requital for this expel her with dishonour from his house or put her to death, because she tried to slay the innocent. And the servants that watch her can scarce restrain her efforts to hang herself, scarce catch the sword and wrest it from her hand. So bitter is her anguish, and she hath recognized the villainy of her former deeds. As for me, friends, I am weary of keeping my mistress from the fatal noose; do ye go in and try to save her life; for if strangers come, they prove more persuasive than the friends of every day.

CHO. Ah yes! I hear an outcry in the house amongst the servants, confirming the news thou hast brought. Poor sufferer! she seems about to show a lively grief for her grave crimes; for she has escaped her servants' hands and is rushing from the house, eager to end her life.

HER. [*rushing wildly on to the stage.*] Woe, woe is me! I will tear my hair and scratch cruel furrows in my cheeks.

NUR. My child, what wilt thou do? Wilt thou disfigure thyself?

HER. Ah me! ah me! Begone, thou fine-spun veil! float from my head away!

NUR. Daughter, cover up thy bosom, fasten thy robe.

HER. Why should I cover it? My crimes against my lord are manifest and clear, they cannot be hidden.

NUR. Art so grieved at having devised thy rival's death?

HER. Indeed I am; I deeply mourn my fatal deeds of daring; alas! I am now accursed in all men's eyes!

NUR. Thy husband will pardon thee this error.

HER. Oh! why didst thou hunt me to snatch away my sword? Give, oh! give it back, dear nurse, that I may thrust it through my heart. Why dost thou prevent me hanging myself?

NUR. What! was I to let thy madness lead thee on to death?

HER. Ah me, my destiny! Where can I find some friendly fire? To what rocky height can I climb above the sea or 'mid some wooded mountain glen, there to die and trouble but the dead?

NUR. Why vex thyself thus? on all of us sooner or later heaven's visitation comes.

HER. Thou hast left me, O my father, left me like a stranded bark, all alone, without an oar. My lord will surely slay me; no home is mine henceforth beneath my husband's roof. What god is there to whose statue I can as a suppliant haste? or shall I throw myself in slavish wise at slavish knees? Would I could speed[1] away from Phthia's land on bird's dark pinion, or like that pine-built ship,[2] the first that ever sailed betwixt the rocks Cyanean!

NUR. My child, I can as little praise thy previous sinful excesses, committed against the Trojan captive, as thy present exaggerated terror. Thy husband will never listen to a barbarian's weak pleading and reject his marriage with thee for this. For thou wast no captive from Troy whom he wedded, but the daughter of a gallant sire, with a rich dower, from a city too of no mean prosperity. Nor will thy father forsake thee, as thou dreadest, and allow thee to be cast out from this house. Nay, enter now, nor show thyself before

[1] Reading *ἀερθείην* with Seidler.

[2] Argo, in quest of the Golden Fleece.

the palace, lest the sight[1] of thee there bring reproach upon thee, my daughter. [*Exit* NURSE.

CHO. Lo! a stranger of foreign appearance from some other land comes hurrying towards us.

ORE. Ladies of this foreign land! is this the home, the palace of Achilles' son?

CHO. Thou hast it; but who art thou to ask such a question?

ORE. The son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, by name Orestes, on my way to the oracle of Zeus at Dodona. But now that I am come to Phthia, I am resolved to inquire about my kinswoman, Hermione of Sparta; is she alive and well? for though she dwells in a land far from my own, I love her none the less.

HER. Son of Agamemnon, thy appearing is as a haven from the storm to sailors; by thy knees I pray, have pity on me in my distress, on me of whose fortunes thou art inquiring. About thy knees I twine my arms with all the force of sacred fillets.

ORE. Ha! what is this? Am I mistaken or do I really see before me the queen of this palace, the daughter of Menelaus?

HER. The same, that only child whom Helen, daughter of Tyndareus, bore my father in his halls; never doubt that.

ORE. O saviour Phœbus, grant us respite from our woe! But what is the matter? art thou afflicted by gods or men?

HER. Partly by myself, partly by the man who wedded me, and partly by some god. On every side I see ruin.

ORE. Why, what misfortune could happen to a woman as yet childless, unless her honour is concerned?

HER. My very complaint! Thou hast hit my case exactly.

ORE. On whom has thy husband set his affections in thy stead?

[1] Nauck regards line 878 as spurious.

HER. On his captive, Hector's wife.

ORE. An evil case indeed, for a man to have two wives!

HER. 'Tis even thus. So I resented it.

ORE. Didst thou with woman's craft devise a plot against thy rival?

HER. Yes, to slay her and her bastard child.

ORE. And didst thou slay them, or did something happen to rescue them from thee?

HER. It was old Peleus, who showed regard to the weaker side.

ORE. Hadst thou any accomplice in this attempted murder?

HER. My father came from Sparta for this very purpose.

ORE. And was he after all defeated by that old man's prowess?

HER. Oh no! but by shame; and he hath gone and left me all alone.

ORE. I understand; thou art afraid of thy husband for what thou hast done.

HER. Thou hast guessed it; for he will have a right to slay me. What can I say for myself? Yet I beseech thee by Zeus the god of our family, send me to a land as far as possible from this, or to my father's house; for these very[1] walls seem to cry out "Begone!" and all the land of Phthia hates me. But if my lord return ere that from the oracle of Phœbus, he will put me to death on a shameful charge, or enslave me to his mistress, whom I ruled before. Maybe[2] some one will say, "How was it thou didst go thus astray?" I was ruined by mischievous women who came to me and puffed me up with words like these: "What! wilt thou suffer that vile captive, a mere bondmaid, to dwell within thy house and share thy wedded rights? By Heaven's queen! if it were my house she should not live to reap my marriage-

[1] Reading οἵδε γε.

[2] Reading πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴποι τις τάδ' ἐξημάρτανες.

harvest!" And I listened to the words of these Sirens, the cunning, knavish, subtle praters, and was filled with silly thoughts. What need had I to care about my lord? I had all I wanted, wealth in plenty, a house in which I was mistress, and as for children, mine would be born in wedlock, while hers would be bastards, half-slaves to mine. Oh! never, never,—this truth will I repeat,—should men of sense, who have wives, allow women-folk to visit them in their homes, for they teach them mischief; one, to gain some private end, helps to corrupt their honour; another, having made a slip herself, wants a companion in misfortune, while many are wantons; and hence it is men's houses are tainted. Wherefore keep strict guard upon the portals of your houses with bolts and bars; for these visits of strange women lead to no good result, but a world of mischief.[1]

CHO. Thou hast given thy tongue too free a rein regarding thy own sex. I can pardon thee in this case, but still women ought to smooth over their sisters' weaknesses.

ORE. 'Twas sage counsel he gave who taught men to hear the arguments on both sides. I, for instance, though aware of the confusion in this house, the quarrel between thee and Hector's wife, waited awhile and watched to see whether thou wouldst stay here or from fear of that captive art minded to quit these halls. Now it was not so much regard for thy message that brought me hither, as the intention of carrying thee away from this house, if, as now, thou shouldst grant me a chance of saying so. For thou wert mine formerly, but art now living with thy present husband through thy father's baseness; since he, before invading Troy's domains, betrothed thee to me, and then[2] afterwards promised thee to thy present lord, provided he captured the city of Troy.

So, as soon as Achilles' son returned hither, I forgave thy

[1] Nauck incloses line 953 in brackets.

[2] Reading ἐμοὶ δοὺς, εἶθ'.

father, but entreated the bridegroom to forego his marriage with thee, telling him all I had gone through and my present misfortune; I might get a wife, I said, from amongst friends, but outside their circle 'twas no easy task for one exiled like myself from home. Thereat he grew abusive, taunting me with my mother's murder and those blood-boltered fiends.[1] And I was humbled by the fortunes of my house, and though 'tis true, I grieved, yet did I endure my sorrow, and reluctantly departed, robbed of thy promised hand. Now therefore, since thou findest thy fortune so abruptly changed and art fallen thus on evil days and hast no help, I will take thee hence and place thee in thy father's hands. For kinship[2] hath strong claims, and in adversity there is naught better than a kinsman's kindly aid.

HER. As for my marriage, my father must look to it; 'tis not for me to decide that. Yes, take me hence as soon as may be, lest my husband come back to his house before I am gone, or Peleus hear that I am deserting his son's abode and pursue me on horse-back.

ORE. Rest easy about the old man's power; and, as for Achilles' son with all his insolence to me, never fear him; such a crafty net this hand hath woven and set for his death with knots that none can loose; whereof I will not speak before the time, but, when my plot begins to work, Delphi's rock will witness it. If but my allies in the Pythian land abide by their oaths, this same murderer of his mother will show that no one else shall marry thee my rightful bride.[3] To his cost will he demand satisfaction of King Phœbus for his father's blood; nor shall his repentance avail him, though he is now submitting to the god. No! he shall perish

[1] *i.e.* the avenging fiends that pursued Orestes after his mother's murder.

[2] Hermann reading τοι for γὰρ assigns these two lines with great plausibility to the Chorus; Nauck prints them so.

[3] Reading, as Paley suggests, γαμεῖν σε μηδέν', ἣν ἐχρῆν ἐμέ.

miserably by Apollo's hand and my false accusations; so shall he find out my enmity. For the deity upsets the fortune of them that hate him, and suffers them not to be high-minded. [*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* HERMIONE.

CHO. O Phœbus! who didst fence the hill of Ilium with a fair coronal of towers, and thou, ocean-god! coursing o'er the main with thy dark steeds, wherefore did ye hand over in dishonour your own handiwork to the war-god, master of the spear, abandoning Troy to wretchedness? Many a well-horsed car ye yoked on the banks of Simois, and many a bloody tournament did ye ordain with never a prize to win; and Ilium's princes are dead and gone; no longer in Troy is seen the blaze of fire on altars of the gods with the smoke of incense. The son of Atreus is no more, slain by the hand of his wife, and she herself hath paid the debt of blood by death, and from her children's hands received her doom. The god's own bidding from his oracle was levelled against her, in the day that Agamemnon's son set forth from Argos and visited his shrine; so he slew[1] her, aye, spilt his own mother's blood. O Phœbus, O thou power divine, how can I believe the story? Anon wherever Hellenes gather, was heard the voice of lamentation, mothers weeping o'er their children's fate, as they left their homes to mate with strangers. Ah! thou art not the only one, nor thy dear ones either, on whom the cloud of grief hath fallen. Hellas had to bear the visitation, and thence the scourge crossed to Phrygia's fruitful fields, raining the bloody drops the death-god loves.[2]

PEL. Ye dames of Phthia, answer my questions. I heard a vague rumour that the daughter of Menelaus had left these halls and fled; so now am I come in hot haste to learn if this be true; for it is the duty of those who are at home to labour in the interests of their absent friends.

[1] Reading Hermann's emendation *κτάνεν* for MSS. *κτεάνων*.

[2] Reading Hermann's *τὸν Ἅιδα φόνον*.

CHO. Thou hast heard aright, O Peleus; ill would it become me to hide the evil case in which I now find myself; our queen has fled and left these halls.

PEL. What was she afraid of? explain that to me.

CHO. She was fearful her lord would cast her out.

PEL. In return[1] for plotting his child's death? surely not?

CHO. Yea, and she was afraid of yon captive.

PEL. With whom did she leave the house? with her father?

CHO. The son of Agamemnon came and took her hence.

PEL. What view hath he to further[2] thereby? Will he marry her?

CHO. Yes, and he is plotting thy grandson's death.

PEL. From an ambuscade, or meeting him fairly face to face?

CHO. In the holy place of Loxias, leagued with Delphians.

PEL. God help us! This is an immediate danger. Hasten one of you with all speed to the Pythian altar and tell our friends there what has happened here, ere Achilles' son be slain by his enemies. [*Enter a* Messenger.

MES. Woe worth the day! what evil tidings have I brought for thee, old sire, and for all who love my master! woe is me!

PEL. Alas! my prophetic soul hath a presentiment.

MES. Aged Peleus, hearken! Thy grandson is no more; so grievously is he smitten by the men of Delphi and the stranger[3] from Mycenæ.

CHO. Ah! what wilt thou do, old man? Fall not; uplift thyself.

PEL. I am a thing of naught; death is come upon me. My voice is choked, my limbs droop beneath me.

MES. Hearken; if thou art eager also[4] to avenge thy friends, lift up thyself and hear what happened.

[1] Nauck reads *ἀντίποινα* for MSS. *ἀντὶ παιδὸς*.

[2] Nauck *προτείνων*.

[3] *i.e.* Orestes.

[4] Reading *εἰ καὶ*, for which Hermann has *εἴπερ*. Dindorf *εἴ τι*.

PEL. Ah, destiny! how tightly hast thou caught me in thy toils, a poor old man at life's extremest verge! But tell me how he was taken from me, my one son's only child; unwelcome as such news is, I fain would hear it.

MES. As soon as we reached the famous soil of Phœbus, for three whole days were we feasting our eyes with the sight. And this, it seems, caused suspicion; for the folk, who dwell near the god's shrine, began to collect in groups, while Agamemnon's son, going to and fro through the town, would whisper in each man's ear malignant hints: "Do ye see yon fellow, going in and out of the god's treasure-chambers, which are full of the gold stored there by all mankind? He is come hither a second time on the same mission as before, eager to sack the temple of Phœbus." Thereon there ran an angry murmur through the city, and the magistrates flocked to their council-chamber, while those, who have charge of the god's treasures, had a guard privately placed amongst the colonnades. But we, knowing naught as yet of this, took sheep fed in the pastures of Parnassus, and went our way and stationed ourselves at the altars with vouchers and Pythian seers. And one said: "What prayer, young warrior, wouldst thou have us offer to the god? Wherefore art thou come?" And he answered: "I wish to make atonement to Phœbus for my past transgression; for once I claimed from him satisfaction for my father's blood." Thereupon the rumour, spread by Orestes, proved to have great weight, suggesting that my master was lying and had come on a shameful errand. But he crosses the threshold of the temple to pray to Phœbus before his oracle,[1] and was busy with his burnt-offering; when a body of men armed with swords set themselves[2] in ambush against him in the cover of the bay-trees, and Clytemnestra's son, that had contrived the whole

[1] Also explained by the Schol. as = *πρὸ τῶν θυσιῶν, i.e.* "before sacrificing."

[2] Hermann's *ἀνθυφιστήκει.*

plot was one of them. There stood the young man praying to the god in sight of all, when lo! with their sharp swords they stabbed Achilles' unprotected son from behind. But he stepped back, for it was not a mortal wound he had received, and drew his sword, and snatching armour from the pegs where it hung on a pillar, took his stand upon the altar-steps, the picture of a warrior grim; then cried he to the sons of Delphi, and asked them: "Why seek to slay me when I am come on a holy mission? What cause is there why I should die?" But of all that throng of bystanders, no man answered him a word, but they set to hurling stones. Then he, though bruised and battered by the showers of missiles from all sides, covered[1] himself behind his mail and tried to ward off the attack, holding his shield first here, then there, at arm's length, but all of no avail; for a storm of darts, arrows and javelins, hurtling spits with double points, and butchers' knives for slaying steers, came flying at his feet; and terrible was the war-dance thou hadst then seen thy grandson dance to avoid their marksmanship. At last, when they were hemming him in on all sides, allowing him no breathing space, he left the shelter of the altar, the hearth where victims are placed, and with one bound was on them as on the Trojans of yore; and they turned and fled like doves when they see the hawk. Many fell in the confusion; some wounded, and others trodden down by one another along the narrow passages; and in that hushed holy house uprose unholy din and echoed back from the rocks. Calm and still my master stood there in his gleaming harness like a flash of light, till from the inmost shrine there came a voice of thrilling horror, stirring the crowd to make a stand. Then fell Achilles' son, smitten through the flank by some Delphian's biting blade, some fellow that slew him with a host to help; and as he fell, there

[1] Paley considers that this line is probably an interpolation; Nauck regards the next as corrupt.

was not one that did not stab him, or cast a rock and batter his corpse. So his whole body, once so fair, was marred with savage wounds. At last they cast the lifeless clay, lying near the altar, forth from the fragrant fane. And we gathered up his remains forthwith and are bringing them to thee, old prince, to mourn and weep and honour with a deep-dug tomb.

This is how that prince who vouchsafeth oracles to others, that judge of what is right for all the world, hath revenged himself on Achilles' son, remembering his ancient quarrel as a wicked man would. How then can he be wise?

[*Exit* Messenger.

[*The body of* NEOPTOLEMUS *is carried in on a bier.*

CHO. Lo! e'en now our prince is being carried on a bier from Delphi's land unto his home. Woe for him and his sad fate, and woe for thee, old sire! for this is not the welcome thou wouldst give Achilles' son, the lion's whelp; thyself too [by this sad mischance [1]] dost share his evil lot.

PEL. Ah! woe is me! here is a sad sight for me to see and take unto my halls! Ah me! ah me! I am undone, thou city of Thessaly! My line now ends; I have no children left me in my home. Oh! the sorrows I seem born to endure! What friend can I look to for relief? Ah, dear lips, and cheeks, and hands! Would thy destiny had slain thee 'neath Ilium's walls beside the banks of Simois!

CHO. Had he so died, my aged lord, he had won him honour thereby, and thine had been the happier lot.

PEL. O marriage, marriage, woe to thee! thou bane of my home, thou destroyer [2] of my city! Ah my child, my boy! would [3] that the honour of wedding thee, fraught with

[1] *κύρσας* is probably corrupt. Nauck omits it, and marks a lacuna.

[2] *ὤλεσας ὤλεσας ἀμὰν* (Hermann).

[3] Paley has a long note on this passage, the sum of which seems to be that it is corrupt and unintelligible. Various emendations, all unsatisfactory, have been proposed. I have followed Hermann's correction,

evil as it was to my children and house, had not thrown o'er thee, my son, Hermione's deadly net! O that the thunderbolt had slain her sooner! and that thou, rash mortal, hadst never charged the great god Phœbus with aiming that murderous shaft that spilt thy hero-father's blood![1]

CHO. Woe! woe! alas! With due observance of funeral rites will I begin the mourning for my dead master.

PEL. Alack and well-a-day! I take up the tearful dirge, ah me! old and wretched as I am.

CHO. 'Tis Heaven's decree; God willed this heavy stroke.

PEL. O darling child, thou hast left me all alone in my halls,[2] old and childless by thy loss.

CHO. Thou shouldst have died, old sire, before thy children.

PEL. Shall I not tear my hair, and smite upon my head with grievous blows? O city! of both my children[3] hath Phœbus robbed me.

CHO. What evils thou hast suffered, what sorrows thou hast seen, thou poor old man! what shall be thy life hereafter?

PEL. Childless, desolate, with no limit to my grief, I must drain the cup of woe, until I die.

CHO. 'Twas all in vain the gods wished thee joy on thy wedding day.[4]

PEL. All my hopes have flown away, fallen short of my high boasts.

CHO. A lonely dweller in a lonely home art thou.

PEL. I have no city any longer;[5] there! on the ground

the sense of which is thus given by Paley, "would that your union with the captive Andromache had not involved you in the death intended for her;" reading ὤφελ' ἐμοὶ γέρας κ.τ.λ.

[1] Phœbus was said to have aimed the arrow of Paris, that slew Achilles.

[2] Nauck reads δόμον ἔλιπες ἔρημον.

[3] Achilles his son, and Neoptolemus his grandson.

[4] The gods had attended the marriage of Peleus and Thetis.

[5] οὐκέτ' ἐστί μοι πόλις (Hermann).

my sceptre do I cast; and thou, daughter of Nereus, 'neath thy dim grotto, shalt see me grovelling in the dust,[1] a ruined king.

CHO. Look, look! [*A dim form of divine appearance is seen hovering in mid air.*] What is that moving? what influence divine am I conscious of? Look, maidens, mark it well; see, yonder is some deity, wafted through the lustrous air and alighting on the plains of Phthia, home of steeds.

THE. O Peleus! because of my wedded days with thee now long agone, I Thetis am come from the halls of Nereus. And first I counsel thee not to grieve to excess in thy present distress, for I too who need ne'er have born children to my sorrow, have lost the child of our love, Achilles swift of foot, foremost of the sons of Hellas. Next will I declare why I am come, and do thou give ear. Carry yonder corpse, Achilles' son, to the Pythian altar and there bury it, a reproach to Delphi, that his tomb may proclaim the violent death he met at the hand of Orestes. And for his captive wife Andromache,—she must dwell in the Molossian land, united in honourable wedlock with Helenus, and with her this babe, the sole survivor as he is of all the line of Æacus, for from him a succession of prosperous kings of Molossia is to go on unbroken; for the race that springs from thee and me, my aged lord, must not thus be brought to naught; no! nor Troy's line either; for her fate[2] too is cared for by the gods, albeit her fall was due to the eager wish of Pallas. Thee too, that thou mayst know the saving grace of wedding me, will I, [a goddess born and daughter of a god,[3]] release from all the ills that flesh is heir to and make a deity to know not death nor decay. From henceforth in the halls of Nereus shalt thou dwell with me,

[1] γᾷ πίτνοντα μ' ὄψει (Hermann).
[2] τἀκείνης (Lenting).
[3] This line is probably interpolated.

god and goddess together; thence shalt thou rise dry-shod from out the main and see Achilles, our dear son, settled in his island-home by the strand of Leuce, that is girdled by the Euxine sea. But get thee to Delphi's god-built town, carrying this corpse with thee, and, after thou hast buried him, return and settle in the cave which time hath hollowed in the Sepian rock and there abide, till from the sea I come with choir of fifty Nereids to be thy escort thence; for fate's decree thou must fulfil; such is the pleasure of Zeus. Cease then to mourn the dead; this is the lot which heaven assigns to all, and all must pay their debt to death.

PEL. Great queen, my honoured wife, from Nereus sprung, all hail! thou art acting herein as befits thyself and thy children. So I will stay my grief at thy bidding, goddess, and, when I have buried the dead, will seek the glens of Pelion, even the place where I took thy beauteous form to my embrace. Surely after this every prudent man will seek to marry a wife of noble stock and give his daughter to a husband good and true, never setting his heart on a worthless woman, not even though she bring a sumptuous dowry to his house. So would men ne'er suffer ill at heaven's hand.

CHO. Many are the shapes of Heaven's denizens, and many a thing they bring to pass contrary to our expectation; that which we thought would be is not accomplished, while for the unexpected God finds out a way. E'en such hath been the issue of this matter.

ELECTRA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

A PEASANT OF MYCENÆ.
ELECTRA.
ORESTES.
PYLADES, a mute.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE COUNTRY-WOMEN.
CLYTEMNESTRA.
OLD MAN.
MESSENGER.
THE DIOSCURI.

SCENE.—On the borders of Argolis.

ELECTRA.

PEA. O Argos, ancient land, and streams of Inachus, whence on a day king Agamemnon sailed to the realm of Troy, carrying his warriors aboard a thousand ships; and after he had slain Priam who was reigning in Ilium and captured the famous city of Dardanus, he came hither to Argos and has set up high on the temple-walls many a trophy, spoil of the barbarians. Though all went well with him in Troy, yet was he slain in his own palace by the guile of his wife Clytemnestra and the hand of Ægisthus, son of Thyestes. So he died and left behind him the ancient sceptre of Tantalus, and Ægisthus reigns in his stead, with the daughter of Tyndareus, Agamemnon's queen, to wife. Now as for those whom he left in his halls, when he sailed to Troy, his son Orestes and his tender daughter Electra,—the boy Orestes, as he was like[1] to be slain by Ægisthus, his sire's old foster-father secretly removed to the land of Phocis and gave to Strophius to bring up, but the maid Electra abode in her father's house, and soon as she had budded into maidenhood, came all the princes of Hellas asking her hand in marriage. But Ægisthus kept[2] her at home for fear she might bear a son to some chieftain who would avenge Agamemnon, nor would he betroth her unto any. But when e'en thus there seemed some room for fear that she might bear some noble lord a child by stealth and Ægisthus was minded

[1] Nauck brackets this line as spurious.

[2] Nauck reads εἴργεν for εἶχεν.

to slay her, her mother, though she had a cruel heart, yet rescued the maiden from his hand. For she could find excuses[1] for having slain her husband, but she feared the hatred she would incur for her children's murder. Wherefore Ægisthus devised this scheme; on Agamemnon's son who had escaped his realm by flight he set a price to be paid to any who should slay him, while he gave Electra to me in marriage, whose ancestors were citizens of Mycenæ. It is not *that* I blame myself for; my family was noble enough, though certainly impoverished, and so my good birth suffers. By making for her this weak alliance he thought he would have little to fear. For[2] if some man of high position had married her, he might have revived the vengeance for Agamemnon's murder, which now is sleeping; in which case Ægisthus would have paid the penalty. But Cypris is my witness that I have ever respected her maidenhood; she is still as though unwed.[3] Unworthy as I am, honour forbids that I should so affront the daughter of a better man. Yea, and I am sorry for[4] Orestes, hapless youth, who is called my kinsman, to think that he should ever return to Argos and behold his sister's wretched marriage. And whoso counts me but a fool for leaving a tender maid untouched when I have her in my house, to him I say, he measures purity by the vicious standard of his own soul, a standard like himself.

ELE. O sable night, nurse of the golden stars! beneath thy pall I go to fetch water from the brook with my pitcher poised upon my head, not indeed because I am reduced to this necessity, but that to the gods I may display the affronts Ægisthus puts upon me, and to the wide firmament pour out my lamentation for my sire. For my own mother,

[1] Because he had slain her daughter Iphigenia, and brought home a rival, Cassandra.

[2] Lines 40-42 are condemned by Kirchhoff.

[3] This line is bracketed by Nauck as spurious.

[4] *στένω*, for which *σέβω* has been conjectured by Schmidt.

the baleful daughter of Tyndareus, hath cast me forth from her house to gratify her lord; for since she hath born other children to Ægisthus she puts me and Orestes on one side at home.

PEA. Oh! why, poor maiden, dost thou toil so hard on my behalf, thou that aforetime wert reared so daintily? why canst thou not forego thy labour, as I bid thee?

ELE. As a god's I count thy kindness to me, for in my distress thou hast never made a mock at me. 'Tis rare fortune when mortals find such healing balm for their cruel wounds as 'tis my lot to find in thee. Wherefore I ought, though thou forbid me, to lighten thy labours, as far as my strength allows, and share all burdens with thee to ease thy load. Thou hast enough to do abroad; 'tis only right that I should keep thy house in order. For when the toiler cometh to his home from the field, it is pleasant to find all comfortable in the house.

PEA. If such thy pleasure, go thy way; for, after all, the spring is no great distance from my house. And at break of day I will drive my steers to my glebe and sow my crop. For no idler, though he has the gods' names ever on his lips, can gather a livelihood without hard work.

[*Exeunt* PEASANT *and* ELECTRA.

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

ORE. Ah! Pylades, I put thee first 'mongst men for thy love, thy loyalty and friendliness to me; for thou alone of all my friends wouldst still honour[1] poor Orestes, in spite of the grievous plight whereto I am reduced by Ægisthus, who with my accursed mother's aid slew my sire. I am come from Apollo's mystic shrine to the soil of Argos, without the knowledge of any, to avenge my father's death upon his murderers. Last night I went unto his tomb and wept thereon, cutting off my hair as an offering and pouring o'er the grave the blood of a sheep for sacrifice, unmarked by

[1] *ἐθαύμαζες*, for which Wecklein reads *ἐθάρσυνες*.

those who lord it o'er this land. And now though I enter not the walled town, yet by coming to the borders of the land I combine two objects; I can escape to another country if any spy me out and recognize me, and at the same time seek [1] my sister, for I am told she is a maid no longer but is married and living here, that I may meet her, and, after enlisting her aid in the deed of blood, learn for certain what is happening in the town. Let us now, since dawn is uplifting her radiant eye, step aside from this path. For maybe some labouring man or serving maid will come in sight, of whom we may inquire whether it is here that my sister hath her home. Lo! yonder I see a servant [2] bearing a full pitcher of water on her shaven head; let us sit down and make inquiry of this bond-maid, if haply we may glean some tidings of the matter which brought us hither, Pylades.

(*They retire a little.*)

ELE. Bestir [3] thy lagging feet, 'tis high time; on, on o'er thy path of tears! ah misery! I am Agamemnon's daughter, she whom Clytemnestra, hateful child of Tyndareus, bare; hapless Electra is the name my countrymen call me. Ah me! for my cruel lot, my hateful existence! O my father Agamemnon! in Hades art thou laid, butchered [4] by thy wife and Ægisthus. Come, raise with me that dirge once more; uplift the woful strain that brings relief. On, on o'er thy path of tears! ah misery! And thou, poor brother, in what city and house [5] art thou a slave, [6] leaving thy suffering sister behind in the halls of our fathers to drain the cup of bitterness? Oh! come, great Zeus, to set me free from this life of sorrow, and to avenge my sire in the blood of his foes, bringing the wanderer home to Argos.[7]

[1] Reading ζητεῖν τ'.
[2] *πρόσπολόν τινα* (Seidler).
[3] *σύντειν', ὥρα*, for which Dobree gives *συντείνειν ὥρα*.
[4] Hermann *σφαγαῖς* for *σφαγεῖς*.
[5] Weil *alav* for *οἶκον*.
[6] Hartung *σύγγον' ἀλατεύεις*, for *σύγγονε λατρεύεις*.
[7] After line 139 Nauck marks a lacuna of nine lines.

Take this pitcher from my head, put it down, that I may wake betimes,[1] while it is yet night, my lamentation for my sire, my doleful chant,[2] my dirge of death, for thee, my father in thy grave, which day by day I do rehearse,[3] rending my skin[4] with my nails, and smiting on my shaven head in mourning for thy death. Woe, woe! rend the cheek; like a swan with clear loud note beside the brimming river calling[5] to its parent dear that lies a-dying in the meshes of the crafty net, so I bewail thee, my hapless sire, after that last fatal bath of thine laid out most piteously in death.

Oh! the horror of that axe which hacked thee so cruelly, my sire! oh! the bitter thought that prompted thy return[6] from Troy! With no garlands or victor's crowns did thy wife welcome thee, but with his two-edged sword she made thee the sad sport of Ægisthus and kept her treacherous paramour.

Cho. O Electra, daughter of Agamemnon, to thy rustic cot I come, for a messenger hath arrived, a highlander from Mycenæ, one who lives on milk, announcing that the Argives are proclaiming a sacrifice for the third day from now, and all our maidens are to go to Hera's temple.

Ele. Kind friends, my heart is not set on festivity, nor do necklaces of gold cause any flutter in my sorrowing bosom, nor will I stand up with the maidens of Argos to beat my foot in the mazy dance. Tears have been my meat day and night[7]; ah misery! See my unkempt hair, my

[1] Reading Dindorf's *ἐπορθρεύσω*, a correction of *ἐπορθοβοάσω*.

[2] After *ἰαχὰν* the MS. adds *ἀοιδὰν*, omitted by Paley as a manifest corruption of the following *Ἀίδα*, which word Hermann repeats twice.

[3] Dindorf, suspicious of *διέπομαι* in this connection, suggests *τἀκομαι* or *ἔγκειμαι*.

[4] The reading in Paley is *δέραν* = "neck." I have ventured to translate *δέρας*, an easy correction, suitable to the context.

[5] *ἀγκαλεῖ* (Seidler). [6] Hermann *ὀδίου βουλᾶς*.

[7] Reading *νυχεύω*, for which Porson suggests *χορεύω*.

tattered dress; are they fit[1] for a princess, a daughter of Agamemnon, or for Troy which once thought of my father as its captor?

CHO. Mighty is the goddess; so come, and borrow of me broidered robes for apparel and jewels of gold that add a further grace to beauty's charms.[2] Dost think to triumph o'er thy foes by tears, if thou honour not the gods? 'Tis not by lamentation but by pious prayers to heaven that thou, my daughter, wilt make fortune smile on thee.

ELE. No god hearkens to the voice of lost Electra, or heeds the sacrifices offered by my father long ago. Ah woe for the dead! woe for the living wanderer, who dwelleth in some foreign land, an outcast and a vagabond at a menial board, sprung though he is of a famous sire! Myself, too, in a poor man's hut do dwell, wasting my soul with grief, an exile from my father's halls, here by the scarred hill-side; while my mother is wedded to a new husband in a marriage stained by blood.

CHO. Many a woe to Hellas and thy house did Helen, thy mother's sister, cause.

ELE. Ha! [*Catching sight of* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.] Friends, I break off my lament; yonder are strangers just leaving the place of ambush where they were couching, and making for the house. We must seek to escape the villains by flying, thou along the path and I into my cottage.

ORE. Stay, poor maid; fear no violence from me.

ELE. O Phœbus Apollo! I beseech thee spare my life.

ORE. Give me the lives[3] of others more my foes than thou!

ELE. Begone! touch me not! thou hast no right to.

ORE. There is none I have a better right to touch.

[1] *εἰ πρέπουσ'* (Reiske).

[2] Reading *χάρισι* (Musgrave) for *χάρισαι* = "accept as a favour," an unusual sense here supplied by Paley.

[3] Reading *κτάνοιμι* without *ἄν* (Bothe).

ELE. How is it then thou waylayest me, sword in hand, near my house?

ORE. Wait and hear, and thou wilt soon agree with me.

ELE. Here I stand; I am in thy power in any case, since thou art the stronger.

ORE. I am come to thee with news of thy brother.

ELE. O best of friends! is he alive or dead?

ORE. Alive; I would fain give thee my good news first.

ELE. God bless thee! in return for thy welcome tidings.

ORE. I am prepared to share that blessing between us.

ELE. In what land is my poor brother spending his dreary exile?

ORE. His ruined life does not conform to the customs[1] of any one city.

ELE. Surely he does not want for daily bread?

ORE. Bread he has, but an exile is a helpless man at best.

ELE. What is this message thou hast brought from him?

ORE. He asks, "Art thou alive? and if so, How art thou faring?"

ELE. Well, first thou seest how haggard I am grown.

ORE. So wasted with sorrow that I weep for thee.

ELE. Next mark my head, shorn and shaven like a Scythian's.

ORE. Thy brother's fate and father's death no doubt distress thee.

ELE. Yes, alas! for what have I more dear than these?

ORE. Ah! and what[2] dost thou suppose is dearer to thy brother?

ELE. He is far away, not here to show his love to me.

ORE. Wherefore art thou living here far from the city?

ELE. I am wedded, sir; a fatal match!

ORE. Alas! for thy brother; I pity him. Is thy husband of Mycenæ?

[1] Reading *νόμον νομίζων*. Nauck adopts *τόπον* from Dio Chrysostom.

[2] Reading Seidler's correction *τί δ' αὖ*.

ELE. He is not the man to whom my father ever thought of betrothing me.

ORE. Tell me all, that I may report it to thy brother.

ELE. I live apart from my husband in this house.

ORE. The only fit inmate would be a hind or herd.

ELE. Poor he is, yet he displays a generous consideration for me.

ORE. Why, what is this consideration that attaches to thy husband?

ELE. He has never presumed to claim from me a husband's rights.

ORE. Is he under a vow of chastity? or does he disdain thee?

ELE. He thought he had no right to flout my ancestry.

ORE. How was it he was not overjoyed at winning such a bride?

ELE. He does not recognize the right of him who disposed of my hand.

ORE. I understand; he was afraid of the vengeance of Orestes hereafter.

ELE. There was that fear, but he was a virtuous man as well.

ORE. Ah! a noble nature this! He deserves kind treatment.

ELE. Yes, if ever the wanderer return.

ORE. But did thy own mother give in to this?

ELE. 'Tis her husband, not her children that a woman loves, sir stranger.

ORE. Wherefore did Ægisthus put this affront on thee?

ELE. His design in giving me to such a husband was to weaken my offspring.

ORE. To prevent thee bearing sons, I suppose,[1] who should punish him?

[1] Sidgwick reads ὡς παῖδα δῆθεν . . . ποινάτορα to avoid δήθε, a word not found elsewhere.

ELE. That was his plan; God grant I may avenge me on him for it!

ORE. Does thy mother's husband know that thou art yet a maid?

ELE. He does not; our silence robs him of that knowledge.

ORE. Are these women friends of thine, who overhear our talk?

ELE. They are, and they will keep our conversation perfectly secret.

ORE. What could Orestes do in this matter, if he *did* return?

ELE. Canst thou ask? Shame on thee for that! Is not this the time for action?

ORE. But suppose he comes, how could he slay his father's murderers?

ELE. By boldly meting out the same fate that his father had meted out to him by his foes.

ORE. Wouldst thou be brave enough to help him slay his mother?

ELE. Aye, with the self-same axe that drank my father's blood.

ORE. Am I to tell him this, and that thy purpose firmly holds?

ELE. Once I have shed my mother's blood o'er his, then welcome death!

ORE. Ah! would Orestes were standing near to hear that!

ELE. I should not know him, sir, if I saw him.

ORE. No wonder; you were both children when you parted.

ELE. There is only one of my friends would recognize him.

ORE. The man maybe who is said to have snatched him away from being murdered?

ELE. Yes, the old servant who tended my father's childhood long ago.

ORE. Did thy father's corpse obtain burial?

ELE. Such burial as it was, after his body had been flung forth from the palace.

ORE. O God! how awful is thy story! Yes, there *is* a feeling, arising even from another's distress, that wrings the human heart. Say on, that when I know the loveless tale, which yet I needs must hear, I may carry it to thy brother. For[1] pity, though it has no place in clownish natures, is inborn in the wise; still it may cause mischief to find excessive cleverness amongst the wise.

CHO. I too am animated by the same desire as the stranger. For dwelling so far from the city I know nothing of the town's scandals, and I should like to hear about them now myself.

ELE. I will tell you, if I may; and surely I may tell a friend about my own and my father's grievous misfortunes. Now since thou movest me to speak, I entreat thee, sir, tell Orestes of our sorrows; first, describe the dress I wear,[2] the load of squalor that oppresses me, the hovel I inhabit after my royal home; tell him how hard I have to work at weaving clothes myself [or else go barely clad and do without[3]]; how I carry home on my head water from the brook; no part have I in holy festival, no place amid the dance; a maiden still I turn from married dames[4] and from Castor too, to whom they betrothed me before he joined the heavenly host, for I was his kinswoman. Meantime

[1] Lines 294-296 seem singularly pointless in this connection, and it has been suggested they are interpolated from the "Antiope."

[2] Schaefer's *στολίζομαι* is an easy correction of the strange *αὐλίζομαι* of MS.

[3] Regarded by Camper, whom Nauck follows, as spurious.

[4] *ἀναίνομαι γυναῖκας οὖσα παρθένος* (Paley's text), for which Nauck reads *ἀναινομαι δὲ γυμνὰς οὖσα παρθένους*. Hartung reads *τελῶ μὲν εἰς*.

my mother, 'mid the spoils of Troy, is seated on her throne, and at her foot-stool slaves from Asia stand and wait, captives of my father's spear, whose Trojan robes are fastened with brooches of gold. And there on the wall my father's blood still leaves a deep dark stain, while his murderer mounts the dead man's car and fareth forth, proudly grasping in his blood-stained hands the sceptre with which Agamemnon would marshal the sons of Hellas. Dishonoured lies his grave; naught as yet hath it received of drink outpoured or myrtle-spray, but bare of ornament his tomb is left. Yea, and 'tis said that noble hero who is wedded to my mother, in his drunken fits, doth leap upon the grave, and pelt with stones my father's monument, boldly gibing at us on this wise, "Where is thy son Orestes? Is he ever coming in his glory to defend thy tomb?" Thus is Orestes flouted behind his back. Oh! tell him this, kind sir, I pray thee. And there be many calling him to come,—I am but their mouthpiece,—these suppliant hands, this tongue, my broken heart, my shaven head, and his own father too. For 'tis shameful that the sire should have exterminated Troy's race and the son yet prove too weak to pit himself against one foe unto the death, albeit he has youth and better blood to boot.

CHO. Lo! here is thy husband hurrying homeward, his day's work done.

PEA. [*entering and catching sight of strangers talking to* ELECTRA.] Ha! who are these strangers I see at my door? And why are they come hither to my rustic gate? can they want my help? for 'tis unseemly for a woman to stand talking with young men.

ELE. Dear husband, be not suspicious of me. For thou shalt hear the truth; these strangers have come to bring me news of Orestes. Good sirs, pardon him those words.

PEA. What say they? is that hero yet alive and in the light of day?

ELE. He is; at least they say so, and I believe them.

PEA. Surely then he hath some memory of his father and thy wrongs?

ELE. These are things to hope for;[1] a man in exile is helpless.

PEA. What message have they brought from Orestes?

ELE. He sent them to spy out my evil case.

PEA. Well, they only see a part of it, though maybe thou art telling them the rest.

ELE. They know all; there is nothing further they need ask.

PEA. Long ere this then shouldst thou have thrown open our doors to them. Enter, sirs; for in return for your good tidings, shall ye find such cheer as my house affords. Ho! servants, take their baggage within; make no excuses, for ye are friends sent by one I love; and poor though I am, yet will I never show meanness in my habits.

ORE. 'Fore heaven! is this the man who is helping thee to frustrate thy marriage, because he will not shame Orestes?

ELE. This is he whom they call my husband, woe is me!

ORE. Ah! there is no sure mark to recognize a man's worth; for human nature hath in it an element of confusion. For instance, I have seen ere now the son of a noble sire prove himself a worthless knave, and virtuous children sprung from evil parents; likewise dearth in a rich man's spirit, and in a poor man's frame a mighty soul. By what standard then shall we rightly judge these things? By wealth? An evil test to use. By poverty then? Nay, poverty suffers from this, that it teaches a man to play the villain from necessity. To martial prowess must I turn?[2] But who could pronounce who is the valiant man merely from the

[1] *i.e.*, the prospect of his being able to help is too far off to permit us to do anything more than entertain hopes. But Bothe, whom Hartung follows, explains it "spero haec ita esse."

[2] ἔλθω, which Kirchhoff, followed by Nauck, alters into ἐλθών.

look of his spear? Better is it to leave these matters to themselves without troubling. For here is a man of no account in Argos, with no family reputation to boast, one of the common herd, proved a very hero. A truce to your folly![1] ye self-deceivers, swollen with idle fancies; learn to judge men by their converse, and by their habits decide who are noble. Such are they who rule aright both[2] states and families; while those forms of flesh, devoid of intellect, are but figure-heads in the market-place. The strong arm, again, no more than the weak awaits the battle-shock, for this depends on natural courage. Well! absent or present,[3] Agamemnon's son, whose business brings us here, deserves this of us, so let us accept a lodging in this house. [*Calling to his servants.*] Ho! sirrahs, go within. A humble host, who does his best, in preference to a wealthy man for me! And so I thankfully accept this peasant's proffered welcome, though I could have preferred that thy brother were conducting me to share his fortune in his halls. Maybe he yet will come; for the oracles of Loxias are sure, but to man's divining "Farewell" say I.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

CHO. Electra, I feel a warmer glow of joy suffuse my heart than ever heretofore; perchance our fortune, moving on at last, will find a happy resting-place.

ELE. O reckless man, why didst thou welcome strangers like these, so far beyond thy station, knowing the poverty of thy house?

PEA. Why? if they are really as noble as they seem, surely they will be equally content with rich or humble fare.

ELE. Well, since thou hast made this error, poor man as thou art, go to my father's kind old foster-sire; on the bank

[1] Paley adopts Badham's emendation *οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσεθ'*.

[2] Reading *καὶ* with Cobet for *τὰς*.

[3] Another interpretation makes *ὁ παρὼν* refer to the peasant, "as our friend here and the absent Orestes too."

of the river Tanaus, the boundary 'twixt Argos and the land of Sparta, he tends his flocks, an outcast from the city; bid him come hither to our house and make some provision for the strangers' entertainment. Glad will he be, and will offer thanks to heaven to hear that the child, whom once he saved, is yet alive. I shall get nothing from my mother from my ancestral halls; for we should rue our message, were she to learn, unnatural wretch! that Orestes liveth.

PEA. I will take this message to the old man, if it seem good to thee; but get thee in at once and there make ready. A woman, when she chooses, can find dainties in plenty to garnish a feast. Besides, there is quite enough in the house to satisfy them with victuals for one day at least. 'Tis in such cases, when I come to muse thereon, that I discern the mighty power of wealth, whether to give to strangers, or to expend in curing the body when it falls sick; but our daily food is a small matter;[1] for all of us, rich as well as poor, are in like case, as soon as we are satisfied.

[*Exeunt* ELECTRA *and* PEASANT.

CHO. Ye famous ships, that on a day were brought to land at Troy by those countless oars, what time ye led the Nereids' dance, where the dolphin music-loving rolled and gambolled round your dusky prows, escorting Achilles, nimble son of Thetis, when he went with Agamemnon to the banks of Trojan Simois; when Nereids left Eubœa's strand, bringing[2] from Hephæstus' golden forge the harness he had fashioned for that warrior's use; him long they sought[3] o'er Pelion and Ossa's spurs, ranging the sacred glens and the peaks of Nymphæa,[4] where his knightly sire

[1] Wecklein, objecting to the harshness of the Greek here, reads *καὶ σμικρὸν ἀρκεῖ*.

[2] Paley's text is followed, but, as he and most editors hint, there is probably some corruption in lines 444-448.

[3] Paley's conjecture *ἐμάστευον* for the corrupt *κόρας μάτευσ'*.

[4] Seidler *νυμφᾶν*.

was training up a light for Hellas, even the sea-born son of Thetis, a warrior swift to help the sons of Atreus.

One that came from Ilium, and set foot in the haven of Nauplia, told me that on the circle of thy far-famed targe, O son of Thetis, was wrought this blazon, a terror to the Phrygians;[1] on the rim of the buckler Perseus with winged sandals, was bearing in his hand across the main the Gorgon's head, just severed[2] by the aid of Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, that rural[3] god whom Maia bore; while in the centre of the shield the sun's bright orb flashed light on the backs of his winged coursers; there too was the heavenly choir of stars, Pleiades and Hyades, to dazzle Hector's eyes and make him flee;[4] and upon his gold-forged helm were sphinxes, bearing in their talons the prey of which the minstrels sing;[5] on his breast-plate was a lioness breathing flame, her eye upon Peirene's steed,[6] in eagerness to rend it. There too in murderous fray[7] four-footed steeds were prancing, while o'er their backs uprose dark clouds of dust. But he[8] who led these warriors stout, was slain by wedding thee, malignant child of Tyndareus! Wherefore shall the gods of heaven one day send thee to thy doom, and I shall yet live to see the sword at thy throat, drinking its crimson tide.

OLD MAN. Where is the young princess, my mistress, Agamemnon's daughter, whom I nursed in days gone by? Oh! how steep is the approach to this house, a hard climb

[1] Nauck *φρικτὰ*.

[2] *λαιμότομον*.

[3] Hermes was the god of Arcadia, his birthplace.

[4] *ὄμμασι τροπαῖοι*, Barnes' emendation.

[5] *i.e.*, carrying off a man.

[6] The Chimæra is glaring up at Pegasus, the winged horse of Bellerophon.

[7] *ἐν δὲ δόρει*, Hermann; *ἄορι δ' ἐν*, Hartung. It is doubtful if either is right.

[8] Understanding Agamemnon's murder by Clytemnestra.

for these old wasted feet of mine! Still, to reach such friends as these, I must drag my bent old back and tottering knees up it. Ah, daughter!—for I see thee now at thy door,—lo! I have brought thee this tender lamb from my own flock, having taken it from its dam, with garlands too and cheese straight from the press, and this flask of choice old wine with fragrant bouquet; 'tis small perhaps, but pour a cup thereof into some weaker drink, and it is a luscious draught. Let some one carry these gifts into the house for the guests; for I would fain wipe from my eyes the rising tears on this tattered cloak.

ELE. Why stands the tear-drop in thine eye, old friend? Is it that my sorrows have been recalled to thee after an interval? or art thou bewailing the sad exile of Orestes, and my father's fate, whom thou didst once fondle in thy arms, in vain, alas! for thee and for thy friends?

OLD MAN. Ah yes! in vain; but still I could not bear[1] to leave him thus; and so I added this to my journey that I sought his grave, and, falling thereupon, wept o'er its desolation; then did I open the wine-skin, my gift to thy guests, and poured a libation, and set myrtle-sprigs round the tomb. And lo! upon the grave itself I saw a black ram had been offered, and there was blood. not long poured forth, and severed locks of auburn hair. Much I wondered, my daughter, who had dared approach the tomb; certainly 'twas no Argive. Nay, thy brother may perchance have come by stealth, and going thither have done honour to his father's wretched grave. Look at the hair, compare it with thy own, to see if the colour of these cut locks is the same; for children in whose veins runs the same father's blood, have usually a close bodily resemblance in most points.

ELE. Old sir, thy words are unworthy of a wise man, if thou thinkest my own brave brother would have come to

[1] Weil *οὐκ ἀνίστενον*.

this land by stealth for fear of Ægisthus. In the next place, how should our hair correspond? His is the hair of a gallant youth trained up in manly sports, mine a woman's curled and combed; nay, that is a hopeless clue. Besides, thou couldst find many, whose hair is of the same colour, albeit not sprung from the same blood. [No, maybe 'twas some stranger cut off his hair in pity at his tomb, or one that came to spy[1] this land privily.[2]]

OLD MAN. Put thy foot in the print of his shoe and mark whether it correspond with thine, my child.

ELE. How should the foot make any impression on stony ground? and if it did, the foot of brother and sister would not be the same in size, for a man's is the larger.

OLD MAN. Hast thou no mark, in case thy brother *should* come,[3] whereby to recognize the weaving of thy loom, the robe wherein I snatched him from death that day?

ELE. Dost thou forget I was still a babe when Orestes left the country? and even if I had woven him a robe, how should he, a mere child then, be wearing the same now, unless our clothes and bodies grow together?

OLD MAN. Where are these guests? I fain would question them face to face about thy brother.

ELE. There they are, in haste to leave the house.

OLD MAN. Well born, it seems, but that may be a sham; for there be plenty such prove knaves. Still I give them greeting.

ORE. All hail, father! To which of thy friends, Electra, does this old relic of mortality belong?

[1] Reading σκοπὸς, cf. line 354. Hartung reads ἐκείρατ' ἢ τῇσδε, σκοποὺς λαθὼν χθονός.

[2] These lines are inserted in most editions after l. 544. The alteration is due to Paley.

[3] Paley, with much reason, marks a lacuna after l. 538 (cf. his note *ad loc.*). The passage as it stands is scarcely intelligible, and μολὼν after εἰ without a finite verb is very doubtful Greek. Musgrave reads μόλοι.

ELE. This is he who nursed my sire, sir stranger.

ORE. What! do I behold him who removed[1] thy brother out of harm's way?

ELE. Behold the man who saved his life; if, that is, he liveth still.

ORE. Ha! why does he look so hard at me, as if he were examining the bright device on silver coin? Is he finding in me a likeness to some other?

ELE. Maybe he is glad to see in thee a companion of Orestes.

ORE. A man I love full well. But why is he walking round me?

ELE. I, too, am watching his movements with amaze, sir stranger.

OLD MAN. My honoured mistress, my daughter Electra, return thanks to heaven,—

ELE. For past or present favours? which?

OLD MAN. That thou hast found a treasured prize, which God is now revealing.

ELE. Hear me invoke the gods. But what dost thou mean, old man?

OLD MAN. Behold before thee, my child, thy nearest and dearest.

ELE. I have long feared thou wert not in thy sound senses.

OLD MAN. Not in my sound senses, because I see thy brother?

ELE. What mean'st thou, aged friend, by these astounding words?

OLD MAN. That I see Orestes, Agamemnon's son, before me.

ELE. What mark dost see that I can trust?

OLD MAN. A scar along his brow, where he fell and cut

[1] Reading Pierson's ἐξέκλιψε.

himself one day in his father's home when chasing a fawn with thee.

ELE. Is it possible? True; I see the mark of the fall.

OLD MAN. Dost hesitate then to embrace thy own dear brother?

ELE. No! not any longer, old friend; for my soul is convinced by the tokens thou showest. O my brother, thou art come at last, and I embrace thee, little as I ever thought to.

ORE. And thee to my bosom at last I press.

ELE. I never thought that it would happen.

ORE. All hope in me was also dead.

ELE. Art thou really he?

ORE. Aye, thy one and only champion, if I can but safely draw to shore[1] the cast I mean to throw; and I feel sure I shall; else must we cease to believe in gods, if wrong is to triumph o'er right.

CHO. At last, at last appears thy radiant dawn, O happy day! and as a beacon to the city hast thou revealed the wanderer, who, long ago, poor boy! was exiled from his father's halls. Now, lady, comes our turn for victory, ushered in by some god. Raise hand and voice in prayer, beseech the gods that good fortune may attend thy brother's entry to the city.

ORE. Enough! sweet though the rapture of this greeting be, I must wait and return it hereafter. Do thou, old friend so timely met, tell me how I am to avenge me on my father's murderer, and on my mother, the partner in his guilty marriage. Have I still in Argos any band of kindly friends? or am I, like my fortunes, bankrupt altogether? With whom am I to league myself? by night or day shall I advance? point out a road for me to take against these foes of mine.

[1] ἦν ἐκσπάσωμαι. (Musgrave.)

OLD MAN. My son, thou hast no friend now in thy hour of adversity. No! that is a piece of rare good luck, to find another share thy fortunes alike for better and for worse. Thou art of every friend completely reft, all hope is gone from thee; be sure of what I tell thee; on thy own arm and fortune art thou wholly thrown to win thy father's home and thy city.

ORE. What must I do to compass this result?

OLD MAN. Slay Thyestes' son and thy mother.

ORE. I came to win that victor's crown, but how can I attain it?

OLD MAN. Thou wouldst never achieve it if thou didst enter the walls.[1]

ORE. Are they manned with guards and armed sentinels?

OLD MAN. Aye truly; for he is afraid of thee, and cannot sleep secure.

ORE. Well then, do thou next propose a scheme, old friend.

OLD MAN. Hear me a moment; an idea has just occurred to me.

ORE. May thy counsel prove good, and my perception keen!

OLD MAN. I saw Ægisthus, as I was slowly pacing hither—

ORE. I welcome thy words. Where was he?

OLD MAN. Not far from these fields, at his stables.

ORE. What was he doing? I see a gleam of hope after our dilemma.

OLD MAN. I thought he was preparing a feast for the Nymphs.

ORE. In return for the bringing up of children or in anticipation of a birth?

OLD MAN. All I know is this, he was preparing to sacrifice oxen.

[1] Following Nauck's reading *τειχέων μὲν ἐλθὼν ἐντὸς οὐδὲν ἂν σθένοις.*

ORE. How many were with him? or was he alone with his servants?

OLD MAN. There was no Argive there; only a band of his own followers.

ORE. Is it possible that any of them will recognize me, old man?

OLD MAN. They are only servants, and they have never even seen thee.

ORE. Will they support me, if I prevail?

OLD MAN. Yes, that is the way of slaves,[1] luckily for thee.

ORE. On what pretext can I approach him?

OLD MAN. Go to some place where he will see thee as he sacrifices.

ORE. His estate is close to the road then, I suppose.

OLD MAN. Yes, and when he sees thee there, he will invite thee to the feast.

ORE. So help me God! He shall rue his invitation.

OLD MAN. After that, form thy own plan according to circumstances.

ORE. Good advice! But my mother, where is she?

OLD MAN. At Argos; but she will yet join her husband[2] for the feast.

ORE. Why did she not come forth with him?

OLD MAN. From fear of the citizens' reproach she stayed behind.

ORE. I understand; she knows that the city suspects her.

OLD MAN. Just so; her wickedness makes her hated.

ORE. How shall I slay her and him together?

ELE. Mine be the preparation of my mother's slaying!

ORE. Well, as for that other matter, fortune will favour us.

ELE. Our old friend here must help us both.

[1] *δμώων*, Porson's conjecture for *ἄλλων*.

[2] *ἔτι πόσει*, Seidler's conjecture; Reiske reads *ἐν τάχει*.

OLD MAN. Aye, that will I; but what is thy scheme for slaying thy mother?

ELE. Go, old man, and tell Clytemnestra [1] from me that I have given birth to a son.

OLD MAN. Some time ago, or quite recently?

ELE. Ten [2] days ago, which are the days of my purification.

OLD MAN. Suppose it done; but how doth this help towards slaying thy mother?

ELE. She will come, when she hears of my confinement.

OLD MAN. What! dost think she cares aught for thee, my child?

ELE. Oh yes! she will weep no doubt over my child's low rank.

OLD MAN. Perhaps she may; but go back [3] again to the point.

ELE. Her death is certain, if she comes.

OLD MAN. In that case, let her come right up to the door of the house.

ELE. Why then it were a little thing to turn her steps into the road to Hades' halls.

OLD MAN. Oh! to see this one day, then die!

ELE. First of all, old friend, act as my brother's guide.

OLD MAN. To the place where Ægisthus is now sacrificing to the gods?

ELE. Then go, find my mother and give her my message.

OLD MAN. Aye that I will, so that she shall think the very words are thine.

ELE. (*To* ORESTES.) Thy work begins at once; thou hast drawn the first lot in the tragedy.

ORE. I will go, if some one will show me the way.

OLD MAN. I will myself conduct thee nothing loth.

[1] Line 651 is rejected as spurious by Matthiae.

[2] δέχ'. So Elmsley for λέγ'.

[3] ἄγε. So Seidler and Musgrave for ἄγω.

ORE. O Zeus, god of my fathers, vanquisher of my foes, have pity[1] on us, for a piteous lot has ours been.

ELE. Oh! have pity on thy own descendants.

ORE. O Hera, mistress of Mycenæ's altars, grant us the victory, if we are asking what is right.

ELE. Yes, grant us vengeance on them for our father's death.

ORE. Thou too, my father, sent to the land of shades by wicked hands, [and Earth, the queen of all, to whom I spread my suppliant palms,] up and champion thy dear children. [Come with all the dead to aid, all they who helped thee break the Phrygians' power, and all who hate ungodly crime.] Dost hear me, father, victim of my mother's rage?

ELE. Sure am I he heareth all; but 'tis time to part. For this cause too I bid thee strike[2] Ægisthus down, because, if thou fall in the struggle and perish, I also die; no longer number me amongst the living; for[3] I will stab myself with a two-edged sword. And now will I go indoors and make all ready there, for, if there come good news from thee, my house shall ring with women's cries of joy; but, if thou art slain, a different scene must then ensue. These are my instructions to thee.

ORE. I know my lesson well.

ELE. Then show thyself a man. (*Exeunt* ORESTES, PYLADES, *and* OLD MAN.) And you, my friends, signal to me by cries the certain issue of this fray. Myself will keep the sword ready in my grasp, for I will never accept defeat, and yield my body to my enemies to insult.

[*Exit* ELECTRA.

[1] To avoid the awkward θ' in οἰκτειρόἐ θ' ἡμᾶς, Nauck rearranges these lines, placing 672, 673 after 676. He also distributes lines 677 to 683 alternately between Orestes and Electra, adding considerably to the effect of the appeal, if the lines are all genuine; but Paley shows grave reasons for regarding 678 and 680-683 as spurious.

[2] θενεῖν, Musgrave.

[3] Nauck regards l. 688 as suspicious.

CHO. Still the story[1] finds a place in time-honoured legends, how on a day Pan, the steward of husbandry, came breathing dulcet music on his jointed pipe, and brought with him from its tender dam on Argive hills, a beauteous lamb with fleece of gold; then stood a herald high upon the rock and cried aloud, "Away to the place of assembly, ye folk of Mycenæ! to behold the strange and awful sight vouchsafed to our blest rulers." Anon the dancers did obeisance to the family of Atreus; the altar-steps of beaten gold were draped; and through that Argive town the altars blazed with fire; sweetly rose the lute's clear note, the handmaid of the Muse's song; and ballads fair were written on the golden lamb, saying that Thyestes had the luck;[2] for he won the guilty love of the wife of Atreus, and carried off to his house the strange creature, and then coming before the assembled folk he declared to them that he had in his house that hornèd beast with fleece of gold. In the self-same hour it was that Zeus changed the radiant courses of the stars, the light of the sun, and the joyous face of dawn, and drave his car athwart the western sky with fervent heat from heaven's fires, while northward fled the rain-clouds, and Ammon's strand grew parched and faint and void of dew, when it was robbed of heaven's genial showers. 'Tis said, though I can scarce believe it, the sun turned

[1] The story was that Atreus and Thyestes, the sons of Pelops, being rival claimants to the throne of Mycenæ, agreed that whichever should be able to exhibit some portent should be king. Now Atreus found a golden lamb among his flocks, and would have exhibited it, but Thyestes, by guilty collusion with his brother's wife Ærope, cheated him and produced the lamb as his. Accordingly he received the kingdom; but Atreus avenged himself by drowning his wife, and by killing the children of Thyestes and serving them up as food to their father, whom he then slew. Whereat Zeus reversed the whole order of nature, to make men suffer for these crimes.

[2] For the corrupt ὡς ἐπίλογοι, Paley suggested ὡς ἐστὶ λάχος which is followed as giving a possible meaning.

round his glowing throne of gold, to vex the sons of men by this change because of the quarrel amongst them. Still, tales of horror have their use in making men regard the gods; of whom thou hadst no thought, when thou slewest thy husband, thou mother of this noble pair.

Hark! my friends, did ye hear that noise, like to the rumbling of an earthquake, or am I the dupe of idle fancy? Hark! hark! once more that wind-borne sound swells loudly on mine ear. Electra! mistress mine! come forth from the house!

ELE. (*rushing out.*) What is it, good friends? how goes the day with us?

CHO. I hear the cries of dying men; no more I know.

ELE. I heard them too, far off, but still distinct.

CHO. Yes, the sound came stealing from afar, but yet 'twas clear.

ELE. Was it the groan of an Argive, or of my friends?

CHO. I know not; for the cries are all confused.

ELE. That word of thine is my death-warrant; why do I delay?

CHO. Stay, till thou learn thy fate for certain.

ELE. No, no; we are vanquished; where are our messengers?

CHO. They will come in time; to slay a king is no light task.

MES. All hail! ye victors, maidens of Mycenæ, to all Orestes' friends his triumph I announce; Ægisthus, the murderer of Agamemnon, lies weltering where he fell; return thanks to heaven.

ELE. Who art thou? What proof dost thou give of this?

MES. Look at me, dost thou not recognize thy brother's servant?

ELE. O best of friends! 'twas fear that prevented me from recognizing thee; now I know thee well. What sayst thou? Is my father's hateful murderer slain?

MES. He is; I repeat it since it is thy wish.

CHO. Ye gods, and Justice, whose eye is on all, at last art thou come.

ELE. I fain would learn the way and means my brother took to slay Thyestes' son.

MES. After we had set out from this house, we struck into the broad high-road, and came to the place where was the far-famed King of Mycenæ. Now he was walking in a garden well-watered, culling a wreath of tender myrtle-sprays for his head, and when he saw us, he called out, "All hail! strangers; who are ye? whence come[1] ye? from what country?" To him Orestes answered, "We are from Thessaly, on our way to Alpheus' banks to sacrifice to Olympian Zeus." When Ægisthus heard that, he said, "Ye must be my guests to-day, and share the feast, for I am even now sacrificing to the Nymphs; and by rising with to-morrow's light ye will be just as far upon your journey; now let us go within." Therewith he caught us by the hand and led us by the way; refuse we could not; and when we were come to the house, he gave command: "Bring water for my guests to wash forthwith, that they may stand around the altar near the laver." But Orestes answered, "'Twas but now we purified ourselves and washed us clean in water from the river. So if we strangers are to join your citizens in sacrifice, we are ready, King Ægisthus, and will not refuse." So ended they their private[2] conference. Meantime the servants, that composed their master's bodyguard, laid aside their weapons, and one and all were busied at their tasks. Some brought the bowl to catch the blood, others took up baskets, while others kindled fire and set cauldrons round about the altars, and the whole house rang. Then did thy mother's husband take the barley for sprinkling, and began casting it upon the hearth with these words, "Ye

[1] πορεύεσθ' ἔστε τ' ἐκ ποίας, Musgrave's correction.

[2] ἐκ μέσου. Hartung ἐν μέσῳ.

Nymphs, who dwell among the rocks, grant that I may often sacrifice with my wife, the daughter of Tyndareus within my halls, as happily as now, and ruin seize my foes!" (whereby he meant Orestes and thyself.) But my master, lowering his voice, offered a different prayer, that he might regain his father's house. Next Ægisthus took from a basket a long straight knife, and cutting off some of the calf's hair, laid it with his right hand on the sacred fire, and then cut its throat when the servants had lifted it upon their shoulders, and thus addressed thy brother; "Men declare that amongst the Thessalians this is counted honourable, to cut up a bull neatly and to manage steeds. So take the knife, sir stranger, and show us if rumour speaks true about the Thessalians." Thereon Orestes seized the Dorian knife of tempered steel and cast from his shoulders his graceful buckled robe; then choosing Pylades to help him in his task, he made the servants withdraw, and catching the calf by the hoof, proceeded to lay bare its white flesh, with arm outstretched, and he flayed the hide quicker than a runner ever finishes the two laps of the horses' race-course; next he laid the belly open, and Ægisthus took the entrails in his hands and carefully examined them. Now the liver had no lobe, while the portal vein leading to the gall-bladder, portended a dangerous attack on him who was observing it. Dark grows Ægisthus' brow, but my master asks, "Why so despondent, good sir?" Said he, "I fear treachery from a stranger. Agamemnon's son of all men most I hate, and he hates my house." But Orestes cried, "What! fear treachery from an exile! thou the ruler of the city? Ho! take this Dorian knife away and bring me a Thessalian cleaver, that we by sacrificial feast may learn the will of heaven; let me cleave the breast-bone." And he took the axe and cut it through. Now Ægisthus was examining the entrails, separating them in his hands, and as he was bending down, thy brother rose on tiptoe and smote him on the

spine, severing the vertebræ of his back; and his body gave one convulsive shudder from head to foot and writhed[1] in the death-agony. No sooner did his servants see it, than they rushed to arms, a host to fight with two; yet did Pylades and Orestes of their valiancy meet them with brandished spears. Then cried Orestes, "I am no foe that come against this city and my own servants, but I have avenged me on the murderer of my sire, I, ill-starred Orestes. Slay me not, my father's former thralls!" They, when they heard him speak, restrained their spears, and an old man, who had been in the family many a long year, recognized him. Forthwith they crown thy brother with a wreath, and utter shouts of joy. And lo! he is coming to show thee the head, not the Gorgon's, but the head of thy hated foe Ægisthus; his death to-day has paid in blood a bitter debt of blood.

CHO. Dear mistress, now with step as light as fawn join in the dance; lift high the nimble foot and be glad. Victory crowns thy brother; he hath won a fairer wreath than[2] ever victor gained beside the streams of Alpheus; so raise a fair hymn to victory, the while I dance.

ELE. O light of day! O bright careering sun! O earth! and night erewhile my only day! now may I open my eyes in freedom, for Ægisthus is dead, my father's murderer. Come friends, let me bring out whate'er my house contains to deck his head and wreath with crowns my conquering brother's brow.

CHO. Bring forth thy garlands for his head, and we will lead the dance the Muses love. Now shall the royal line, dear to us in days gone by, resume its sway o'er the realm,

[1] *ἰσφάδαζε*, Valckenaer's correction of *ἠλάλαζε*, which is only applicable to joyful cries.

[2] After *κρείσσω* the oldest edition adds *τοῖς* which Canter altered to *τῆς*.

having laid low the usurper as he deserves. So let the shout go up, whose notes are those of joy.

ELE. Hail! glorious victor, Orestes, son of a sire who won the day 'neath Ilium's walls, accept this wreath to bind about the tresses of thy hair. Not in vain hast thou run thy course unto the goal and reached thy home again; no! but thou hast slain thy foe, Ægisthus, the murderer of our father. Thou too, O Pylades, trusty squire, whose training shows thy father's sterling worth, receive a garland from my hand, for thou no less than he hast a share in this emprise; and so I pray, good luck be thine for ever!

ORE. First recognize the gods, Electra, as being the authors of our fortune, and then praise me their minister and fate's. Yea, I come from having slain Ægisthus in very deed, no mere pretence; and to make thee the more certain of this, I am bringing thee his corpse, which, if thou wilt, expose for beasts to rend, or set it upon a stake for birds, the children of the air, to prey upon; for now is he thy slave, once called thy lord and master.

ELE. I am ashamed to utter my wishes.

ORE. What is it? speak out, for thou art through the gates of fear.

ELE. I am ashamed to flout the dead, for fear some spite[1] assail me.

ORE. No one would blame thee for this.

ELE. Our folk are hard to please, and love scandal.

ORE. Speak all thy mind, sister; for we entered on this feud with him on terms admitting not of truce.

ELE. Enough! [*Turning to the corpse of* ÆGISTHUS.] With which of thy iniquities shall I begin my recital? With which shall I end it? To which allot a middle place? And yet I never ceased, as each day dawned, to rehearse the story I would tell thee to thy face, if ever I were freed from my old terrors; and now I am; so I will pay thee back

[1] Tyrrwhitt φθόνος, which Hartung adopts.

with the abuse I fain had uttered to thee when alive. Thou wert my ruin, making me and my brother orphans, though we had never injured thee, and thou didst make a shameful marriage with my mother, having slain her lord who led the host of Hellas, though thyself didst never go to Troy. Such was thy folly, thou didst never dream that my mother would prove thy curse when thou didst marry her, though thou wert wronging my father's honour. Know this; whoso defiles his neighbour's wife, and afterward is forced to take her to himself, is a wretched wight, if he supposes she will be chaste as his wife, though she sinned against her former lord. Thine was a life most miserable, though thou didst pretend 'twas otherwise; well thou knewest how guilty thy marriage was, and my mother knew she had a villain for husband. Sinners both, ye took[1] each other's lot, she thy fortune, thou her curse. While everywhere in Argos thou wouldst hear such phrases as, "that woman's husband," never, "that man's wife." Yet 'tis shameful for the wife and not the man to rule the house; wherefore I loathe those children, who are called in the city not the sons of the man, their father, but of their mother. For instance, if a man makes a great match above his rank, there is no talk of the husband but only of the wife. Herein lay thy grievous error, due to ignorance; thou thoughtest thyself some one, relying on thy wealth, but this is naught save to stay with us a space. 'Tis nature that stands fast, not wealth. For it, if it abide unchanged, exalts man's horn;[2] but riches dishonestly acquired and in the hands of fools, soon take their flight, their blossom quickly shed. As for thy sins with women, I pass them by, 'tis not for maiden's lips to mention them, but I will shrewdly hint thereat. And then thy arrogance! because forsooth thou hadst a palace and some looks to boast. May I never

[1] *ἀφαιρεῖσθον*, for which Nauck gives *ἐπηυρέσθην*.

[2] *αἴρει κάρα*, for which Nauck reads *αἴρει κακά*. Fix *αἴρει*. Seidler *ἀρεῖ*.

have a husband with a girl's face, but one that bears him like a man! For the children of these latter cling to a life of arms, while those, who are so fair to see, do only serve to grace the dance. Away from me! (*Spurning the corpse with her foot.*) Time[1] has shown thy villainy, little as thou reckest of the forfeit thou hast paid for it. Let none suppose, though he have run the first stage of his course with joy, that he will get the better of Justice, till he have reached the goal and ended his career.

CHO. Terrible alike his crime and your revenge; for mighty is the power of justice.

ORE. 'Tis well. Carry his body within the house and hide it, sirrahs, that, when my mother comes, she may not see his corpse before she is smitten herself.

ELE. Hold! let us strike out another scheme.

ORE. How now? Are those allies from Mycenæ whom I see?

ELE. No, 'tis my mother, that bare me.

ORE. Full into the net she is rushing, oh, bravely!

ELE. See how proudly she rides in her chariot and fine robes!

ORE. What must we do to our mother? Slay her?

ELE. What! has pity seized thee at sight of her?

ORE. O God! how can I slay her that bare and suckled me?

ELE. Slay her as she slew thy father and mine.

ORE. O Phœbus, how foolish was thy oracle—

ELE. Where Apollo errs, who shall be wise?

ORE. In bidding me commit this crime—my mother's murder!

ELE. How canst thou be hurt by avenging thy father?

ORE. Though pure before, I now shall carry into exile the stain of a mother's blood.

[1] *ἰρρ', οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ὧν ἐφευρεθεὶς χρόνῳ δίκην δέδωκας ὧδέ τις κακοῦργος ὤν.* Hartung reads *ἐφευρέθης δεδωκώς* with a full stop after the latter word.

ELE. Still, if thou avenge not thy father, thou wilt fail in thy duty.

ORE. And if I slay my mother, I must pay the penalty to her.

ELE. And so must thou to him,[1] if thou resign the avenging of our father.

ORE. Surely it was a fiend in the likeness of the god that ordered this!

ELE. Seated on the holy tripod? I think not so.

ORE. I cannot believe this oracle was meant.

ELE. Turn not coward! Cast not thy manliness away!

ORE. Am I to devise the same crafty scheme for her?

ELE. The self-same death thou didst mete out to her lord Ægisthus.

ORE. I will go in; 'tis an awful task I undertake; an awful deed I have to do; still if it is Heaven's will, be it so; I loathe and yet I love the enterprise.

[ORESTES *withdraws into the house.*

CHO. Hail! Queen of Argos, daughter of Tyndareus, sister of those two noble sons of Zeus, who dwell in the flame-lit firmament amid the stars, whose guerdon high it is to save the sailor tossing on the sea. All hail! because of thy wealth and high prosperity, I do thee homage as I do the blessed gods. Now[2] is the time, great queen, for us to pay our court unto thy fortunes.

CLY. Alight from the car, ye Trojan maids, and take my hand that I may step down from the chariot. With Troy's spoils the temples of the gods are decked, but I have obtained these maidens as a special gift from Troy, in ret

[1] It seems better with Hartung to remove the note of interrogat the end of this line. τῷ δ' αὖ will then refer to the god who in the task of avenging the murdered man. Reading τῷ δ' αὖ . . . δι with Reiske and Porson.

[2] νῦν *is inserted* after καιρὸς by Musgrave.

for my lost daughter, a trifling boon no doubt, but still an ornament to my house.

ELE. And may not I, mother, take that highly-favoured hand of thine? I am a slave like them, an exile from my father's halls in this miserable abode.

CLY. See, my servants are here; trouble not on my account.

ELE. Why, thou didst make me thy prisoner by robbing me of my home; like these I became a captive when my home was taken, an orphan all forlorn.

CLY. True; but thy father plotted so wickedly against those of his own kin whom least of all he should have treated so.[1] Speak I must; albeit, when a woman gets an evil reputation, there is a feeling of bitterness against all she says; unfairly indeed in my case, for it were only fair to hate after learning the circumstances,[2] and seeing if the object deserves it; otherwise, why hate at all? Now Tyndareus bestowed me on thy father not that I or any children I might bear should be slain. Yet he went and took my daughter from our house to the fleet at Aulis, persuading me that Achilles was to wed her; and there he held her o'er the pyre, and cut Iphigenia's snowy throat. Had he slain her to save his city from capture, or to benefit his house, or to preserve his other children, a sacrifice of one for many, I could have pardoned him. But, as it was, his reasons for murdering my child were these: the wantonness of Helen and her husband's folly in not punishing the traitress. Still, wronged as I was, my rage had not burst forth for this, nor would I have slain my lord, had he not returned to me with that frenzied maiden and made her his mistress, keeping at once[3] two brides beneath the same roof. Women maybe are given to folly, I do not deny it; this granted, when a husband goes astray and sets aside his

[1] *i.e.* Iphigenia, whom he sacrificed.

[2] *μαθόντας, . . . ἔχῃ.* So Seidler and Reiske.

[3] *κατεῖχ' ὁμοῦ;* so Dawes for *κατείχομεν.*

own true wife, she fain will follow his example and find another love; and then in our case hot abuse is heard, while the men, who are to blame for this, escape without a word. Again, suppose Menelaus had been secretly snatched from his home, should I have had to kill Orestes to save Menelaus, my sister's husband? How would thy father have endured this? Was he then to escape death for slaying what was mine, while I was to suffer at his hands? I slew him, turning, as my only course, to his enemies. For which of all thy father's friends would have joined me in his murder? Speak all that is in thy heart, and prove against me with all free speech, that thy father's death was not deserved.

ELE. Justly urged! but thy justice is not free from shame[1]; for in all things should every woman of sense yield to her husband. Whoso[2] thinketh otherwise comes not within the scope of what I say. Remember, mother, those last words of thine, allowing me free utterance before thee.

CLY. Daughter, far from refusing it, I grant it again.

ELE. Thou wilt not, when thou hearest, wreak thy vengeance on me?

CLY. No, indeed; I shall welcome thy opinion.

ELE. Then will I speak, and this shall be the prelude of my speech: Ah, mother mine! would thou hadst had a better heart; for though thy beauty and Helen's win you praises well deserved, yet are ye akin in nature, a pair of wantons, unworthy of Castor. She was carried off, 'tis true, but her fall was voluntary; and thou hast slain the bravest soul in Hellas, excusing thyself on the ground that thou didst kill a husband to avenge a daughter; the world does not know thee[3] so well as I do, thou who before ever

[1] *i.e.* it is a disgrace for a woman to insist too much on her strict rights. Nauck reads *σὴ δίκη*.

[2] *ᾧ* for *εἰ*, Reiske.

[3] *ἴσασί σ' εὖ*, Porson.

thy daughter's death was decided, yea, soon as thy lord had started from his home, wert combing thy golden tresses at thy mirror. That wife who, when her lord is gone from home, sets to beautifying herself, strike off from virtue's list; for she has no need to carry her beauty abroad, save she is seeking some mischief. Of all the wives in Hellas thou wert the only one I know who wert overjoyed when Troy's star[1] was in the ascendant, while, if it set, thy brow was clouded, since thou hadst no wish that Agamemnon should return from Troy.[2] And yet thou couldst have played a virtuous part to thy own glory. The husband thou hadst was no whit inferior to Ægisthus, for he it was whom Hellas chose to be her captain. And when thy sister Helen wrought that deed of shame, thou couldst have won thyself great glory, for vice is a warning and calls attention to virtue. If, as thou allegest, my father slew thy daughter, what is the wrong I and my brother have done thee? How was it thou didst not bestow on us our father's halls after thy husband's death, instead of bartering them to buy a paramour? Again, thy husband is not exiled for thy son's sake, nor is he slain to avenge my death, although by him this life is quenched twice as much as e'er my sister's was; so if murder is to succeed murder in requital, I and thy son Orestes must slay thee to avenge our father; if that was just, why so is this. Whoso[3] fixes his gaze on wealth or noble birth and weds a wicked woman, is a fool; better is a humble partner in his home, if she be virtuous, than a proud one.

Cho. Chance rules the marriages of women; some I see turn out well, others ill, amongst mankind.

Clv. Daughter, 'twas ever thy nature to love thy father. This too one finds; some sons cling to their father, others

[1] τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ, so Musgrave.

[2] Nauck regards this line as spurious.

[3] Nauck incloses lines 1097-1101 in brackets as being pointless in this context.

have a deeper affection for their mother. I will forgive thee, for myself am not so exceeding glad at the deed that I have done, my child.

But thou,—why thus unwashed and clad in foul attire, now that the days of thy lying-in are accomplished?[1] Ah me, for my sorry schemes! I have goaded my husband into anger more than e'er I should have done.

ELE. Thy sorrow comes too late; the hour of remedy has gone from thee; my father is dead. Yet why not recall that exile, thy own wandering son?

CLY. I am afraid; 'tis my interest, not his that I regard. For they say he is wroth for his father's murder.

ELE. Why, then, dost thou encourage thy husband's bitterness against us?

CLY. 'Tis his way; thou too hast a stubborn nature.

ELE. Because I am grieved; yet will I check my spirit.

CLY. I promise then he shall no longer oppress thee.

ELE. From living in my home he grows too proud.

CLY. Now there! 'tis thou that art fanning the quarrel into new life.

ELE. I say no more; my dread of him is even what it is.

CLY. Peace! Enough of this. Why didst thou summon me, my child?

ELE. Thou hast heard, I suppose, of my confinement; for this I pray thee, [since I know not how,[2]] offer the customary sacrifice [on the tenth day after birth,] for I am a novice herein, never having had a child before.

CLY. This is work for another, even for her who delivered thee.

ELE. I was all alone in my travail and at the babe's birth.

[1] This line is regarded by Nauck with suspicion; also 1115.

[2] The words inclosed in brackets are regarded by Nauck as spurious on the authority of Otto Jahn.

CLE. Dost live so far from neighbours?

ELE. No one cares to make the poor his friends.

CLY. Well, I will go to offer to the gods a sacrifice for the child's completion of the days; and when I have done thee this service, I will seek the field where my husband is sacrificing to the Nymphs. Take this chariot hence, my servants, and tie the horses to the stalls; and when ye think that I have finished my offering to the gods, attend me, for I must likewise pleasure my lord.

[*Going into the house.*

ELE. Enter our humble cottage; but, prithee, take care that my smoke-grimed walls soil not thy robes; now wilt thou offer to the gods a fitting sacrifice. There stands the basket ready, and the knife is sharpened, the same that slew the bull,[1] by whose side thou soon wilt lie a corpse; and thou shalt be his bride in Hades' halls whose wife thou wast on earth. This is the boon I will grant thee, while thou shalt pay me for my father's blood. [*Exit* ELECTRA.

CHO. Misery is changing sides; the breeze veers round, and now blows fair upon my house. The day is past when my chief fell murdered in his bath, and the roof and the very stones of the walls rang with this his cry: "O cruel wife, why art thou murdering me on my return to my dear country after ten long years?"

The tide is turning, and justice[2] that pursues the faithless wife is drawing within its grasp the murderess, who slew her hapless lord, when he came home at last to these towering Cyclopean walls,—aye, with her own hand she smote him with the sharpened steel, herself the axe uplifting. Unhappy husband![3] whate'er the curse that possessed that

[1] *i.e.* Ægisthus.

[2] *δίκα διαδρόμου λέχους*, *i.e.* vengeance for affections that transfer themselves so easily to another; but the phrase is obscure and possibly corrupt. Hartung reads *λάχους*.

[3] The text here is corrupt. Paley is followed.

wretched woman. Like a lioness of the hills that rangeth through the woodland for her prey, she wrought the deed.

CLY. (*within.*) O my children, by Heaven I pray ye spare your mother!

CHO. Dost hear her cries within the house?

CLY. O God! ah me!

CHO. I too bewail thee, dying by thy children's hands. God deals out His justice in His good time. A cruel fate is thine, unhappy one; yet didst thou sin in murdering thy lord.

But lo! from the house they come, dabbled in their mother's fresh-spilt gore, their triumph proving the piteous butchery.[1] There is not nor ever has been a race more wretched than the line of Tantalus.

[*The two corpses are shown.*

ORE. O Earth, and Zeus whose eye is over all! behold this foul deed of blood, these two corpses lying here that I have slain in vengeance for my sufferings.

*[2] * * * *
* * * * *

ELE. Tears are all too weak for this, brother; and I am the guilty cause. Ah, woe is me! How hot my fury burned against the mother that bare me!

ORE. Alas! for thy lot, O mother mine! A piteous, piteous doom, aye, worse than that, hast thou incurred at children's hands! Yet justly hast thou paid forfeit for our father's blood. Ah, Phœbus! thine was the voice that praised this vengeance; thou it is that hast brought these hideous scenes to light, and caused this deed of blood.[3] To

[1] προσφαγμάτων, Musgrave's conjecture for προσφθεγμάτων.

[2] Two verses have been lost here.

[3] Reading ἄφατα φανερὰ δ' ἐξέπραξας, φόνια δ' ὤπασας. This is Hartung's emendation. He regards ἄχεα, also λέχε' ἀπὸ γᾶς Ἑλλανίδος as clumsily interpolated glosses, contradictory of the poet's meaning. (Cf. his long note *ad loc.*)

what city can I go henceforth? what friend, what man of any piety will bear the sight of a mother's murderer like me?

ELE. Ah me! alas! and whither can I go? What share have I henceforth in dance or marriage rite? What husband will accept me as his bride?

ORE. Again thy fancy changes with the wind;[1] for now thou thinkest aright, though not so formerly; an awful deed didst thou urge thy brother against his will to commit, dear sister. Oh! didst thou see how the poor victim threw open her robe and showed her bosom as I smote her, sinking on her knees,[2] poor wretch? My heart melted within me.

ELE. Full well I know the agony through which thou didst pass at hearing thy own mother's bitter cry.

ORE. Ah yes! she laid her hand upon my chin, and cried aloud, "My child, I entreat thee!" and she clung about my neck, so that I let fall the sword.

ELE. O my poor mother! How didst thou endure to see her breathe her last before thy eyes?

ORE. I threw my mantle o'er them and began the sacrifice by plunging the sword into my mother's throat.

ELE. Yet 'twas I that urged thee on, yea, and likewise grasped the steel. Oh! I have done an awful deed.

ORE. Oh! take and hide our mother's corpse beneath a pall, and close her gaping wound. (*Turning to the corpse.*) Ah! thy murderers were thine own children.

ELE. (*covering the corpse.*) There! thou corpse both loved and loathed;[3] still o'er thee I cast a robe, to end the grievous troubles of our house.

CHO. [*Divine forms are seen hovering above the house.*] See! where o'er the roof-top spirits are appearing, or gods maybe from heaven, for this is not a road that mortals tread

[1] *πρὸς αὔραν*, probably a gloss.
[2] *γόνατα*, Camper's correction of *γόνιμα*
[3] *φίλα τε κοὐ φίλα·* (Paley).

Why come they thus where mortal eyes can see them clearly?

DIO. Hearken, son of Agamemnon. We, the twin sons of Zeus, thy mother's sisters, call thee, even Castor and his brother Polydeuces. 'Tis but now we have reached Argos after stilling the fury of the sea for mariners,[1] having seen the slaying of our sister, thy mother. She hath received her just reward, but thine is no righteous act, and Phœbus—but no! he is my king, my lips are sealed—*is* Phœbus still, albeit the oracle he gave thee was no great proof of his wisdom. But we must acquiesce herein. Henceforth must thou follow what Zeus and destiny ordain for thee. On Pylades bestow Electra for his wife to take unto his home; do thou leave Argos, for after thy mother's murder thou mayst not set foot in the city. And those grim goddesses[2] of doom, that glare like savage hounds, will drive thee mad and chase thee to and fro; but go thou to Athens and make thy prayer to the holy image of Pallas, for she will close their fierce serpents' mouths,[3] so that they touch thee not, holding o'er thy head her ægis with the Gorgon's head. A hill there is, to Ares sacred, where first the gods in conclave sat to decide the law of blood, in the day that savage Ares slew Halirrothius, son of the ocean-king, in anger for the violence he offered to his daughter's honour; from that time all decisions given there are most holy and have heaven's sanction. There must thou have this murder tried; and if equal votes are given, they shall save thee from death in the decision, for Loxias will take the blame upon himself, since it was his oracle that advised thy mother's murder. And this shall be the law for all posterity; in every trial the accused shall win his case if the votes are equal. Then shall those dread goddesses, stricken with grief at this, vanish into a cleft of the earth close to the hill, revered by

[1] *ναυσὶν*, Barnes.
[2] The Eumenides.
[3] *ἰστομωμένας*, so Kirchhoff for *ἱπτομένας*.

men thenceforth as a place for holy oracles; whilst thou must settle in a city of Arcadia on the banks of the river Alpheus near the shrine of Lycæan Apollo, and the city shall be called after thy name. To thee I say this. As for the corpse of Ægisthus, the citizens of Argos must give it burial; but Menelaus, who has just arrived at Nauplia from the sack of Troy, shall bury thy mother, Helen helping him; for she hath come from her sojourn in Egypt in the halls of Proteus, and hath never been to Troy; but Zeus, to stir up strife and bloodshed in the world, sent forth a phantom of Helen to Ilium. Now let Pylades take his maiden wife and bear her to his home in Achæa; also he must conduct thy so-called kinsman[1] to the land of Phocis, and there reward him well. But go thyself along the narrow Isthmus, and seek Cecropia's happy home. For once thou hast fulfilled the doom appointed for this murder, thou shalt be blest and free from all thy troubles.

CHO. Ye sons of Zeus, may we draw near to speak with you?

DIO. Ye may, since ye are not polluted by this murder.

ORE. May I too share your converse, sons of Tyndareus?

DIO. Thou too; for to Phœbus will I ascribe this deed of blood.

CHO. How was it that ye, the brothers of the murdered woman, gods too, did not ward the doom-goddesses from her roof?

DIO. 'Twas fate that brought resistless doom to her, and that thoughtless oracle that Phœbus gave.

ELE. But why did the god, and wherefore did his oracles make me my mother's murderer?

DIO. A share in the deed, a share in its doom; one ancestral curse hath ruined both of you.

ORE. Ah, sister mine! at last I see thee again only to be

[1] *i.e.* the peasant to whom Electra had been given.

robbed in a moment of thy dear love; I must leave thee, and by thee be left.

DIO. Hers are a husband and a home; her only suffering this, that she is quitting Argos.

ORE. Yet what could call forth deeper grief than exile from one's fatherland? I must leave my father's house, and at a stranger's bar be sentenced for my mother's blood.

DIO. Be of good cheer; go to the holy town of Pallas; keep a stout heart only.

ELE. O my brother, best and dearest! clasp me to thy breast; for now is the curse of our mother's blood cutting us off from the home of our fathers.

ORE. Throw thy arms in close embrace about me. Oh! weep as o'er my grave when I am dead.

DIO. Ah me! that bitter cry makes even gods shudder to hear. Yea, for in my breast and in every heavenly being's dwells pity for the sorrows of mankind.

ORE. Never to see thee more!

ELE. Never again to stand within thy sight!

ORE. This is my last good-bye to thee.

ELE. Farewell, farewell, my city! and ye my fellow-countrywomen, a long farewell to you!

ORE. Art thou going already, truest of thy sex?

ELE. I go, the teardrop dimming my young eye.

ORE. Go, Pylades, and be happy; take and wed Electra.

DIO. Their only thoughts will be their marriage; but haste thee to Athens, seeking to escape these hounds of hell, for they are on thy track in fearful wise, swart monsters, with snakes for hands, who reap a harvest of man's agony. But we twain must haste away o'er the Sicilian main to save the seaman's ship. Yet as we fly through heaven's expanse we help not the wicked; but whoso in his life loves piety and justice, all such we free from troublous toils and save. Wherefore let no man be minded to act unjustly, or with

men foresworn set sail; such the warning I, a god, to mortals give.

CHO. Farewell! truly that mortal's is a happy lot, who can thus fare, unafflicted by any calamity.

THE BACCHANTES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DIONYSUS.
PENTHEUS.
CHORUS OF BACCHANTES.
TEIRESIAS.
CADMUS.
SERVANT.
FIRST MESSENGER.
SECOND MESSENGER.
AGAVE.

SCENE.—Before the Palace of Pentheus at Thebes.

THE BACCHANTES.

DIO. Lo! I am come to this land of Thebes, Dionysus, the son of Zeus, of whom on a day Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, was delivered by a flash of lightning. I have put off the god and taken human shape, and so present myself at Dirce's springs and the waters of Ismenus. Yonder I see my mother's monument where the bolt slew her nigh her house, and there are the ruins of her home smouldering with the heavenly flame that blazeth still,—Hera's deathless outrage on my mother. To Cadmus all praise I offer, because he keeps this spot hallowed, his daughter's precinct, which my own hands have shaded round about with the vine's clustering foliage.

Lydia's glebes, where gold abounds, and Phrygia have I left behind; o'er Persia's sun-baked plains, by Bactria's walled towns and Media's wintry clime have I advanced; through Arabia, land of promise; and Asia's length and breadth, outstretched along the brackish sea, with many a fair walled town peopled with mingled race of Hellenes and barbarians; and this is the first city in Hellas I have reached. There too have I ordained dances and established my rites, that I might manifest my godhead to men;[1] but Thebes is the first city in the land of Hellas that I have made ring with shouts of joy, girt in a fawn-skin, with a thyrsus, my ivy-bound spear, in my hand; since my mother's

[1] After this line Paley supposes the loss of a line; κἀκεῖ being = in Asia also, and the sentence being incomplete as it now stands. Pierson placed line 20 after 22.

sisters, who least of all should have done it, denied that Dionysus was the son of Zeus, saying that Semele, when she became a mother by some mortal lover, tried to foist her sin on Zeus,—a clever ruse of Cadmus, which, they boldly asserted, caused Zeus to slay her for the falsehood about the marriage. Wherefore these are they whom I have driven frenzied from their homes, and they are dwelling on the hills with mind distraught; and I have forced them to assume the dress worn in my orgies, and all the women-folk of Cadmus' stock have I driven raving from their homes, one and all alike; and there they sit upon the roofless rocks beneath the green pine-trees, mingling amongst the sons of Thebes. For this city must learn, however loth, seeing that it is not initiated in my Bacchic rites, and I must take up my mother's defence, by showing to mortals that the child she bore to Zeus is a deity. Now Cadmus gave his sceptre and its privileges to Pentheus, his daughter's child, who wages war 'gainst my divinity, thrusting me away from his drink-offerings, and making no mention of me in his prayers. Therefore will I prove to him and all the race of Cadmus that I am a god. And when I have set all in order here, I will pass hence to a fresh country, manifesting myself; but if the city of Thebes in fury takes up arms and seeks to drive my votaries from the mountain, I will meet them at the head of my frantic rout. This is why I have assumed a mortal form, and put off my godhead to take man's nature.[1]

O ye who left Tmolus, the bulwark of Lydia, ye women, my revel rout! whom I brought from your foreign homes to be ever by my side and bear me company, uplift the cymbals native to your Phrygian home, that were by me and the great mother Rhea first devised, and march around the royal halls of Pentheus smiting them, that the city of

[1] Lines 53 and 54 are rejected by Bernhardy.

Cadmus may see you; while I will seek Cithæron's glens, there with my Bacchanals to join the dance.

[*Exit* DIONYSUS.

CHO. From Asia o'er the holy ridge of Tmolus I hasten to a pleasant task, a toil that brings no weariness, for Bromius' sake, in honour of the Bacchic god. Who loiters in the road? who lingers 'neath the roof? Avaunt! I say, and let every lip be hushed in solemn silence; for I will raise a hymn[1] to Dionysus, as custom aye ordains. O happy he! who to his joy is initiated in heavenly mysteries and leads a holy life, joining heart and soul in Bacchic revelry upon the hills, purified from every sin; observing the rites of Cybele, the mighty mother, and brandishing the thyrsus, with ivy-wreathèd head, he worships Dionysus. Go forth, go forth, ye Bacchanals, bring home the Bromian god Dionysus, child of a god, from the mountains of Phrygia to the spacious streets of Hellas, bring home the Bromian god! whom on a day his mother in her sore travail brought forth untimely, yielding up her life beneath the lightning stroke of Zeus's wingèd bolt; but forthwith Zeus, the son of Cronos, found for him another womb wherein to rest, for he hid him in his thigh and fastened it with golden pins to conceal him from Hera. And when the Fates had fully formed the horned god, he brought him forth and crowned him with a coronal of snakes, whence it is the thyrsus-bearing Mænads hunt the snake to twine about their hair. O Thebes, nurse of Semele! crown thyself with ivy; burst forth, burst forth with blossoms fair of green convolvulus, and with the boughs of oak and pine join in the Bacchic revelry; don thy coat of dappled fawn-skin, decking it with tufts of silvered hair; with reverent hand the sportive wand now wield. Anon shall the whole land be dancing, when Bromius leads his revellers to the hills, to the hills away! where wait him groups of maidens

[1] *ὑμνήσω*, a somewhat doubtful reading on account of metrical difficulties, which would be satisfied by Nauck's *κελαδῶ*.

from loom and shuttle roused in frantic haste by Dionysus. O hidden cave of the Curetes! O hallowed haunts in Crete, that saw Zeus born, where Corybantes with crested helms devised for me in their grotto the rounded timbrel of ox-hide, mingling Bacchic minstrelsy with the shrill[1] sweet accents of the Phrygian flute, a gift bestowed by them on mother Rhea, to add its crash of music to the Bacchantes' shouts of joy; but frantic satyrs won it from the mother-goddess for their own, and added it to their dances in festivals, which gladden the heart of Dionysus, each third recurrent year. Oh! happy that votary, when[2] from the hurrying revel-rout he sinks to earth, in his holy robe of fawn-skin, chasing the goat to drink its blood, a banquet sweet of flesh uncooked, as he hastes to Phrygia's or to Libya's hills; while in the van the Bromian god exults with cries of Evoe. With milk and wine and streams of luscious honey flows the earth, and Syrian incense smokes. While the Bacchante holding in his hand a blazing torch of pine uplifted on his wand waves it, as he speeds along, rousing wandering votaries, and as he waves it cries aloud with wanton tresses tossing in the breeze; and thus to crown the revelry, he raises loud his voice, "On, on, ye Bacchanals, pride of Tmolus with its rills of gold! to the sound of the booming drum, chanting in joyous strains the praises of your joyous god with Phrygian accents lifted high, what time the holy lute with sweet complaining note invites you to your hallowed sport, according well with feet that hurry wildly to the hills; like a colt that gambols at its mother's side in the pasture, with gladsome heart each Bacchante bounds along."

TEI. What loiterer at the gates will call Cadmus from the house, Agenor's son, who left the city of Sidon and founded here the town of Thebes? Go one of you, announce to him

[1] The words *βάκχια συντόνῳ* are probably corrupt, but no satisfactory emendation has yet been offered. (Cf. Sandys' note, *ad loc.*)

[2] *Sandys* reads *ὃς ἂν* with Kirchhoff.

that Teiresias is seeking him; he knows himself the reason of my coming and the compact I and he have made in our old age to bind the thyrsus with leaves and don the fawn-skin, crowning our heads the while with ivy-sprays.

CAD. Best of friends! I was in the house when I heard thy voice, wise as its owner. I come prepared, dressed in the livery of the god. For 'tis but right I should magnify with all my might my own daughter's son, Dionysus, who hath shown his godhead unto men.[1] Where are we to join the dance? where plant the foot and shake the hoary head? Do thou, Teiresias, be my guide, age leading age, for thou art wise. Never shall I weary, night or day, of beating the earth with my thyrsus. What joy to forget our years!

TEI. Why, then thou art as I am. For I too am young again, and will essay the dance.

CAD. We will drive then in our chariot to the hill.

TEI. Nay, thus would the god not have an equal honour paid.

CAD. Well, I will lead thee, age leading age.

TEI. The god will guide us both thither without toil.

CAD. Shall we alone of all the city dance in Bacchus' honour?

TEI. Yea, for we alone are wise, the rest are mad.

CAD. We stay too long; come, take my hand.

TEI. There! link thy hand in my firm grip.

CAD. Mortal that I am, I scorn not the gods.

TEI. No subtleties do I indulge about the powers of heaven. The faith we inherited from our fathers, old as time itself, no reasoning shall cast down;[2] no! though it were the subtlest invention of wits refined. Maybe some one will say, I have no respect for my grey hair in going to dance with ivy round my head; not so, for the god did not define whether[3] old or young should dance, but from all alike he

[1] Line 182 is regarded with suspicion by most editors.

[2] κατα.βαλεῖ, Scaliger.

[3] Matthiae and Kirchhoff read οὔτε . . . οὔτε.

claims a universal homage, and scorns nice calculations[1] in his worship.

CAD. Teiresias, since thou art blind, I must prompt thee what to say. Pentheus is coming hither to the house in haste, Echion's son, to whom I resign the government. How scared he looks! what strange tidings will he tell?

PEN. I had left my kingdom for awhile, when tidings of strange mischief in this city reached me; I hear that our women-folk have left their homes on pretence of Bacchic rites, and on the wooded hills rush wildly to and fro, honouring in the dance this new god Dionysus, whoe'er he is; and in the midst of each revel-rout the brimming wine-bowl stands, and one by one they steal away to lonely spots to gratify their lust, pretending forsooth that they are Mænads bent on sacrifice, though it is Aphrodite they are placing before the Bacchic god. As many as I caught, my gaolers are keeping safe in the public prison fast bound; and all who are gone forth, will I chase from the hills, Ino and Agave too who bore me to Echion, and Actæon's mother Autonoe. In fetters of iron will I bind them and soon put an end to these outrageous Bacchic rites. They say there came a stranger hither, a trickster and a sorcerer, from Lydia's land, with golden hair and perfumed locks, the flush of wine upon his face,[2] and in his eyes each grace that Aphrodite gives; by day and night he lingers in our maidens' company on the plea of teaching Bacchic mysteries. Once let me catch him within these walls, and I will put an end to his thyrsus-beating and his waving of his tresses, for I will cut his head from his body. This is the fellow who says that Dionysus is a god, says that he was once stitched up in the thigh of Zeus,—that child who with his mother was blasted by

[1] *δι' ἀριθμῶν δ' οὐδέν*. Bernhardy rejects the line as spurious. Sandys after noticing the numerous proposed emendations suggests *παραλιπὼν δ' οὐδέν'* = "omitting no man."

[2] *οἰνωπὸς*, Barnes.

the lightning flash, because the woman falsely said her marriage was with Zeus. Is not this enough to deserve the awful penalty of hanging, this stranger's wanton insolence, whoe'er he be?

But lo! another marvel. I see Teiresias, our diviner, dressed in dappled fawn-skins, and my mother's father too, wildly waving[1] the Bacchic wand; droll sight enough! Father, it grieves me to see you two old men so void of sense. Oh! shake that ivy from thee! Let fall the thyrsus from thy hand, my mother's sire! Was it thou, Teiresias, urged him on to this? Art bent on introducing this fellow as another new deity amongst men, that thou mayst then observe the fowls of the air and make a gain from fiery divination? Were it not that thy grey hairs protected thee, thou shouldst sit in chains amid the Bacchanals, for introducing knavish mysteries; for where the gladsome grape is found at women's feasts, I deny that their rites have any longer good results.

CHO. What impiety![2] Hast thou no reverence, sir stranger, for the gods or for Cadmus who sowed the crop of earth-born warriors? Son of Echion as thou art, thou dost shame thy birth.

TEI. Whenso a man of wisdom finds a good topic for argument, it is no difficult matter to speak well; but thou, though possessing a glib tongue as if endowed with sense, art yet devoid thereof in all thou sayest. A headstrong man, if he have influence and a capacity for speaking, makes a bad citizen because he lacks sense. This new deity, whom thou deridest, will rise to power I cannot say how great, throughout Hellas. Two things there are, young prince, that hold first rank among men, the goddess Demeter, that is, the earth,—call her which name thou please; she it is that feedeth

[1] Kirchhoff reads *βακχεύοντας· ἀλλ' ἀναίνομαι.* The word *πάτερ* is probably not genuine, and the plural would be more in place here.

[2] *δυσσεβείας*, Reiske.

men with solid food; and as her counterpart [1] came this god, the son of Semele, who discovered the juice of the grape and introduced it to mankind, stilling thereby each grief that mortals suffer from, soon as e'er they are filled with the juice of the vine; and sleep also he giveth, sleep that brings forgetfulness of daily ills, the sovereign charm for all our woe. God [2] though he is, he serves all other gods for libations, so that through him mankind is blest. He it is whom thou dost mock, because he was sewn up in the thigh of Zeus. But I will show thee this fair mystery. When Zeus had snatched him from the lightning's blaze, and to Olympus borne the tender babe, Hera would have cast him forth from heaven, but Zeus, as such a god well might, devised a counterplot. He broke off a fragment of the ether which surrounds the world, and made thereof a hostage against Hera's bitterness, while he gave out Dionysus into other hands; hence, in time, men said that he was reared [3] in the thigh of Zeus, having changed [4] the word and invented a legend, because the god was once a hostage to the goddess Hera. This god too hath prophetic power, for there is no small prophecy inspired by Bacchic frenzy; for whenever the god in his full might enters the human frame, he makes his frantic votaries foretell the future. Likewise [5] he hath some share in Ares' rights; for oft, or ever a weapon is touched, a panic seizes an army when it is marshalled in array; and this too is a frenzy sent by Dionysus. Yet shalt thou behold him e'en on Delphi's rocks leaping o'er the cloven height, torch

[1] ὁ δ' ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τἀντίπαλον, for which Badham proposed ὁ δ' ἡδονὴν ἀντίπαλον. Sandys suggests παυσίπονον for the latter word.

[2] Dindorf regards lines 284-297 as spurious. On this whole obscure passage, Sandys' note may be consulted with advantage.

[3] Pierson reads ῥαφῆναι.

[4] *i.e.* changing ὄμηρον into μηρόν.

[5] Lines 302-305 are suspected by Nauck, 305 also by Pierson and *Wecklein.*

in hand, waving and brandishing the branch by Bacchus loved, yea, and through the length and breadth of Hellas. Hearken to me, Pentheus; never boast that might alone doth sway the world, nor if thou think so, unsound as thy opinion is, credit thyself with any wisdom; but receive the god into thy realm, pour out libations, join the revel rout, and crown thy head. It is not Dionysus that will force chastity on women in their love; but this is what we should consider, whether chastity is part of their nature for good and all; for if it is, no really modest maid will ever fall 'mid Bacchic mysteries. Mark this: thou thyself art glad when thousands throng thy gates, and citizens extol the name of Pentheus; he too, I trow, delights in being honoured. Wherefore I and Cadmus, whom thou jeerest so, will wreath our brows with ivy and join the dance; pair of greybeards though we be, still must we take part therein; never will I for any words of thine fight against heaven. Most grievous is thy madness, nor canst thou find a charm to cure thee, albeit charms have caused thy malady.[1]

CHO. Old sir, thy words do not discredit Phoebus, and thou art wise in honouring Bromius, potent deity.

CAD. My son, Teiresias hath given thee sound advice; dwell with us, but o'erstep not the threshold of custom; for now thou art soaring aloft, and thy wisdom is no wisdom. E'en[2] though he be no god, as thou assertest, still say he is; be guilty of a splendid fraud, declaring him the son of Semele, that she may be thought the mother of a god, and we and all our race gain honour. Dost thou mark the awful fate of Actæon? whom savage hounds of his own rearing rent in pieces in the meadows, because he boasted himself a better hunter than Artemis. Lest thy fate be the same, come let me crown thy head with ivy; join us in rendering homage to the god.

[1] *i.e.*, you are under a spell which no drugs can break.

[2] Lines 333-336 are suspected by Nauck and others.

PEN. Touch me not! away to thy Bacchic rites thyself never try to infect me with thy foolery! Vengeance will I have on the fellow who teaches thee such senselessness Away one of you without delay! seek yonder seat where he observes his birds, wrench it from its base with levers, turn it upside down, o'erthrowing it in utter confusion, and toss his garlands to the tempest's blast. For by so doing shall I wound him most deeply. Others of you range the city and hunt down this girl-faced stranger, who is introducing a new complaint amongst our women, and doing outrage to the marriage tie. And if haply ye catch him, bring him hithe to me in chains, to be stoned to death, a bitter ending to his revelry in Thebes.

TEI. Unhappy wretch! thou little knowest what thou ar saying. Now art thou become a raving madman, even befor unsound in mind. Let us away, Cadmus, and pray earnestly for him, spite of his savage temper, and likewise for the city that the god inflict not a signal vengeance. Come, follow me with thy ivy-wreathed staff; try to support my tottering frame as I do thine, for it is unseemly that two old men should fall; but let that pass. For we must serve the Bacchic god, the son of Zeus. Only, Cadmus, beware lest Pentheus bring sorrow to thy house; it is not my prophetic art, but circumstances that lead me to say this; for the words of a fool are folly. [*Exeunt* CADMUS *and* TEIRESIAS

CHO. O holiness, queen amongst the gods, sweeping on golden pinion o'er the earth! dost hear the words of Pentheus, dost hear his proud blaspheming against Bromius, the son of Semele, first of all the blessed gods at every merry festival? His it is to rouse the revellers to dance, to laugh away dull care, and wake the flute, whene'er at banquets of the gods the luscious grape appears, or when the wine-cup in the feast sheds sleep on men who

[1] *i.e.*, "the son of sorrow," one of the many plays on names in *Euripides.*

wear the ivy-spray. The end of all unbridled speech and lawless senselessness is misery; but the life of calm repose and the rule of reason abide unshaken and support the home; for far away in heaven though they dwell, the powers divine behold man's state. Sophistry is not wisdom, and to indulge in thoughts beyond man's ken is to shorten life;[1] and if a man on such poor terms[2] should aim too high, he may miss the pleasures in his reach. These, to my mind, are the ways of madmen and idiots. Oh! to make my way to Cyprus, isle of Aphrodite, where dwell the love-gods strong to soothe man's soul, or to Paphos,[3] which that foreign river, never fed by rain, enriches with its hundred mouths! Oh! lead me, Bromian god, celestial guide of Bacchic pilgrims, to the hallowed slopes of Olympus, where Pierian Muses have their haunt most fair. There dwell the Graces; there is soft desire; there thy votaries may hold their revels freely. The joy of our god, the son of Zeus, is in banquets, his delight is in peace, that giver of riches and nurse divine of youth. Both to rich and poor alike hath he granted the delight of wine, that makes all pain to cease; hateful to him is every one who careth not to live the life of bliss, that lasts through days and nights of joy. True wisdom[4] is to keep the heart and soul aloof from over-subtle wits. That which the less enlightened crowd approves and practises, will I accept.[5]

SER. [DIONYSUS *is led in bound.*] We are come, Pentheus, having hunted down this prey, for which thou didst send us forth; not in vain hath been our quest. We found our quarry

[1] Following Hermann who adopts the Aldine punctuation, *i.e.*, no stop after *φρονεῖν*.

[2] *ἐπὶ τοὐτ-μ*, Paley reads *τοὐτου* "in the time of this life."

[3] Countless attempts, all unconvincing, have been made to explain or emend this word. What has Paphos to do with the Nile? Meineke suggests *χθόνα θ'*.

[4] *σοφὸν δ'*, Aldus.

[5] *τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν*, Kirchhoff.

tame; he did not fly from us, but yielded himself without a struggle; his cheek ne'er blanched, nor did his ruddy colour change, but with a smile he bade me bind and lead him away, and he waited, making my task an easy[1] one. For very shame I said to him, "Against my will, sir stranger, do I lead thee hence, but Pentheus ordered it, who sent me hither." As for his votaries whom thou thyself didst check, seizing and binding them hand and foot in the public gaol, all these have loosed their bonds and fled into the meadows where they now are sporting, calling aloud on the Bromian god. Their chains fell off their feet of their own accord, and doors flew open without man's hand to help. Many a marvel hath this stranger brought with him to our city of Thebes; what yet remains must be thy care.

PEN. Loose his hands[2]; for now that I have him in the net he is scarce swift enough to elude me. So, sir stranger, thou art not ill-favoured from a woman's point of view, which was thy real object in coming to Thebes; thy hair is long because thou hast never been a wrestler, flowing right down thy cheeks most wantonly; thy skin is white to help thee gain thy end, not tanned by ray of sun, but kept within the shade, as thou goest in quest of love with beauty's bait. Come, tell me first of thy race.

DIO. That needs no braggart's tongue, 'tis easily told; maybe thou knowest Tmolus by hearsay.

PEN. I know it, the range that rings the city of Sardis round.

DIO. Thence I come, Lydia is my native home.

PEN. What makes thee bring these mysteries to Hellas?

DIO. Dionysus, the son of Zeus, initiated me.

PEN. Is there a Zeus in Lydia, who begets new gods?

[1] *εὐτρεπὲς*, Canter.

[2] *μέθεσθε χειρῶν*, so Burges and Dobree for *μαίνεσθε* of the MS. Bothe ingeniously suggests *μαίνεσθε χείρον τοῦδ'* = "ye are more mad *than he;*" and so Nauck reads.

DIO. No,[1] but the Zeus who married Semele in Hellas.

PEN. Was it by night or in the face of day that he constrained thee?

DIO. 'Twas face to face he intrusted his mysteries to me.

PEN. Pray, what special feature stamps thy rites?

DIO. That is a secret to be hidden from the uninitiated.

PEN. What profit bring they to their votaries?

DIO. Thou must not be told, though 'tis well worth knowing.

PEN. A pretty piece of trickery, to excite my curiosity!

DIO. A man of godless life is an abomination to the rites of the god.

PEN. Thou sayest thou didst see the god clearly; what was he like?

DIO. What his fancy chose; I was not there to order this.

PEN. Another clever twist and turn of thine, without a word of answer.

DIO. He were a fool, methinks, who would utter wisdom to a fool.

PEN. Hast thou come hither first with this deity?

DIO. All foreigners already celebrate these mysteries with dances.

PEN. The reason being, they are far behind Hellenes in wisdom.

DIO. In this at least far in advance, though their customs differ.

PEN. Is it by night or day thou performest these devotions?

DIO. By night mostly; darkness lends solemnity.

PEN. Calculated to entrap and corrupt women.

DIO. Day too for that matter may discover shame.

[1] Reading with Musgrave, *οὐκ, ἀλλ' ὁ Σεμέλην ἐνθάδε ζεύξας γάμους.*

PEN. This vile quibbling settles thy punishment.

DIO. Brutish ignorance and godlessness will settle thine.

PEN. How bold our Bacchanal is growing! a very master in this wordy strife!

DIO. Tell me what I am to suffer; what is the grievous doom thou wilt inflict upon me?

PEN. First will I shear off thy dainty tresses.

DIO. My locks are sacred; for the god I let them grow.

PEN. Next surrender that thyrsus.

DIO. Take it from me thyself; 'tis the wand of Dionysus I am bearing.

PEN. In dungeon deep thy body will I guard.

DIO. The god himself will set me free, whene'er I list.

PEN. Perhaps he may, when thou standest amid thy Bacchanals and callest on his name.[1]

DIO. Even now he is near me and witnesses my treatment.

PEN. Why, where is he? To my eyes he is invisible.

DIO. He is by my side; thou art a godless man and therefore dost not see him.

PEN. Seize him! the fellow scorns me and Thebes too.

DIO. I bid you bind me not, reason addressing madness.

PEN. But I say "bind!" with better right than thou.

DIO. Thou hast no knowledge of the life thou art leading; thy very existence is now a mystery to thee.[2]

PEN. I am Pentheus, son of Agave and Echion.

DIO. Well-named to be misfortune's mate!

PEN. Avaunt! Ho! shut him up within the horses' stalls hard by, that for light he may have pitchy gloom. Do thy dancing there, and these women whom thou bringest with thee to share thy villainies I will either sell as slaves or make their hands cease from this noisy beating of drums, and set them to work at the loom as servants of my own.

[*Exit* PENTHEUS.

[1] *i.e.*, never.

[2] Elmsley's emendation is followed, *οὐδ' ὁρᾷς ἔθ' ὅστις εἶ.*

DIO. I will go; for that which fate forbids, can never befall me. For this thy mockery be sure Dionysus will exact a recompense of thee,—even the god whose existence thou deniest; for thou art injuring him by haling me to prison.

[*Exit* DIONYSUS, *guarded.*

CHO. Hail to thee, Dirce, happy maid, daughter revered of Achelous! within thy founts thou didst receive in days gone by the babe of Zeus, what time his father caught him up into his thigh from out the deathless flame, while thus he cried: "Go rest, my Dithyrambus, there within thy father's womb; by this name, O Bacchic god, I now proclaim thee to Thebes." But thou, blest Dirce, thrustest me aside, when in thy midst I strive to hold my revels graced with crowns. Why dost thou scorn me? Why avoid me? By the clustered charm that Dionysus sheds o'er the vintage I vow there yet shall come a time when thou wilt turn thy thoughts to Bromius. [What furious rage[1]] the earth-born race displays, even Pentheus sprung of a dragon of old, himself the son of earth-born Echion, a savage monster in his very mien, not made in human mould, but like some murderous giant pitted against heaven; for he means to bind me, the handmaid of Bromius, in cords forthwith, and e'en now he keeps my fellow-reveller pent within his palace, plunged in a gloomy dungeon. Dost thou mark this, O Dionysus, son of Zeus, thy prophets struggling 'gainst resistless might? Come, O king,[2] brandishing thy golden thyrsus along the slopes of Olympus; restrain the pride of this blood-thirsty wretch! Oh! where in Nysa, haunt of beasts, or on the peaks of Corycus art thou, Dionysus, marshalling with thy wand the revellers? or haply in the thick forest depths of Olympus, where erst Orpheus with his lute gathered

[1] *οἵαν οἵαν ὀργὰν.* These words are generally regarded as a copyist's gloss, due to a misunderstanding of the text. Without them, translate: "Pentheus betrays his earth-born descent." . . .

[2] *ἄνα*, so Hermann for *ἀνὰ*.

trees to his minstrelsy, and beasts that range the fields. Ah, blest Pieria! Evius honours thee, to thee will he come with his Bacchic rites to lead the dance, and thither will he lead the circling Mænads, crossing the swift current of Axius and the Lydias, that giveth wealth and happiness to man, yea, and[1] the father of rivers, which, as I have heard, enriches with his waters fair a land of steeds.

DIO. What ho! my Bacchantes, ho! hear my call, oh! hear.

1ST CHO.[2] Who art thou? what Evian cry is this that calls me? whence comes it?

DIO. What ho! once more I call, I the son of Semele, the child of Zeus.

2ND CHO. My master, O my master, hail!

3RD CHO. Come to our revel-band, O Bromian god.

4TH CHO. Thou solid earth!

5TH CHO. Most awful shock!

6TH CHO. O horror! soon will the palace of Pentheus totter and fall.

7TH CHO. Dionysus is within this house.

8TH CHO. Do homage to him.

9TH CHO. We do! we do!

10TH CHO. Did ye mark yon architrave of stone upon the columns start asunder?

11TH CHO. Within these walls the triumph-shout of Bromius himself will rise.

DIO. Kindle the blazing torch with lightning's fire, abandon to the flames the halls of Pentheus.

12TH CHO. Ha! dost not see the flame, dost not clearly mark[3] it at the sacred tomb of Semele, the lightning flame which long ago the hurler of the bolt left there?

[1] *πατέρα τε*, perhaps the Haliacmon is meant. Bothe omitting *τε* understands the Lydias as before.

[2] The distribution of the following lines follows Paley's arrangement.

[3] *αὐγάζεις*, Nauck.

13TH CHO. Your trembling limbs prostrate, ye Mænads, low upon the ground.

14TH CHO. Yea, for our king, the son of Zeus, is assailing and utterly confounding this house.

DIO. Are ye so stricken with terror that ye have fallen to the earth, O foreign dames? Ye saw then, it would seem, how the Bacchic god made Pentheus' halls to quake; but arise, be of good heart, compose your trembling limbs.[1]

CHO. O chiefest splendour of our gladsome Bacchic sport, with what joy I see thee in my loneliness!

DIO. Were ye cast down when I was led into the house, to be plunged into the gloomy dungeons of Pentheus?

CHO. Indeed I was. Who was to protect me, if thou shouldst meet with mishap? But how wert thou set free from the clutches of this godless wretch?

DIO. My own hands worked out my own salvation, easily and without trouble.

CHO. But did he not lash fast thy hands with cords?

DIO. There too I mocked him; he thinks he bound me, whereas he never touched or caught hold of me, but fed himself on fancy. For at the stall, to which he brought me for a gaol, he found a bull, whose legs and hoofs he straightly tied, breathing out fury the while, the sweat trickling from his body, and he biting his lips; but I from near at hand sat calmly looking on. Meantime came the Bacchic god and made the house quake, and at his mother's tomb relit the fire; but Pentheus, seeing this, thought his palace was ablaze, and hither and thither he rushed, bidding his servants bring water; but all in vain was every servant's busy toil. Thereon he let this labour be awhile, and, thinking maybe that I had escaped, rushed into the palace with his murderous sword unsheathed. Then did Bromius,—so at least it seemed to me; I only tell you what

[1] Lines 606 and 607 are regarded as suspicious by Nauck.

I thought,—made a phantom[1] in the hall, and he rushed after it in headlong haste, and stabbed the lustrous air, thinking he wounded me. Further the Bacchic god did other outrage to him; he dashed the building to the ground, and there it lies a mass of ruin, a sight to make him rue most bitterly my bonds. At last from sheer fatigue he dropped his sword and fell fainting; for he, a mortal frail, dared to wage war upon a god; but I meantime quietly left the house and am come to you, with never a thought of Pentheus. But methinks he will soon appear before the house; at least there is a sound of steps within. What will he say, I wonder, after this? Well, be his fury never so great, I will lightly bear it; for 'tis a wise man's way to school his temper into due control.

PEN. [*Rushing out.*] Shamefully have I been treated; that stranger, whom but now I made so fast in prison, hath escaped me. Ha! there is the man! What means this? How didst thou come forth, to appear thus in front of my palace?

DIO. Stay where thou art; and moderate thy fury.

PEN. How is it thou hast escaped thy fetters and art at large?

DIO. Did I not say, or didst thou not hear me, "There is one will loose me."

PEN. Who was it? there is always something strange in what thou sayest.

DIO. He who makes the clustering vine to grow for man.

PEN. * * * *

DIO.[2] A fine taunt indeed thou hurlest here at Dionysus!

PEN. [*To his servants.*] Bar every tower that hems us in, I order you.

DIO. What use? Cannot gods pass even over walls?

[1] *φάσμα*, Jacobs' emendation for *φῶς*.

[2] The exact drift of this passage is not clear, and editors have been in doubt to which of the speakers to assign this verse. All mark a lacuna of one line, some after 651, others after 652.

PEN. How wise thou art, except where thy wisdom is needed!

DIO. Where most 'tis needed, there am I most wise. But first listen to yonder messenger and hear what he says; he comes from the hills with tidings for thee; and I will await thy pleasure, nor seek to fly.

MES. Pentheus, ruler of this realm of Thebes! I am come from Cithæron, where the dazzling flakes of pure white snow ne'er cease to fall.

PEN. What urgent news dost bring me?

MES. I have seen, O king, those frantic Bacchanals, who darted in frenzy from this land with bare white feet, and I am come to tell thee and the city the wondrous deeds they do, deeds passing strange. But I fain would hear, whether I am freely to tell all I saw there, or shorten my story; for I fear thy hasty temper, sire, thy sudden bursts of wrath and more than princely rage.

PEN. Say on, for thou shalt go unpunished by me in all respects; for to be angered with the upright is wrong.[1] The direr thy tale about the Bacchantes, the heavier punishment will I inflict on this fellow who brought his secret arts amongst our women.

MES. I was just driving the herds of kine to a ridge of the hill as I fed them,[2] as the sun shot forth his rays and made the earth grow warm; when lo! I see three revel-bands of women; Autonoe was chief of one, thy mother Agave of the second, while Ino's was the third. There they lay asleep, all tired out; some were resting on branches of the pine, others had laid their heads in careless ease on oak-leaves piled upon the ground, observing all modesty; not, as thou

[1] This line is rejected by Nauck.

[2] Reading *βόσκων*, the clever emendation of Sandys for *μόσχων*; on the other hand many regard *ὑπεξήκριζον* as intransitive, *i.e.*, "the cattle were just making their way uphill," in which case *μόσχων* must be retained.

sayest, seeking to gratify their lusts alone amid the woods, by wine and soft flute-music maddened.

Anon in their midst thy mother uprose and cried aloud to wake them from their sleep, when she heard the lowing of my horned kine. And up they started to their feet, brushing from their eyes sleep's quickening dew, a wondrous sight of grace and modesty, young and old and maidens yet unwed. First o'er their shoulders they let stream their hair; then all did gird their fawn-skins up, who hitherto had left the fastenings loose, girdling the dappled hides with snakes that licked their cheeks. Others fondled in their arms gazelles or savage whelps of wolves, and suckled them,—young mothers these with babes at home, whose breasts were still full of milk; crowns they wore of ivy or of oak or blossoming convolvulus. And one took her thyrsus and struck it into the earth, and forth there gushed a limpid spring; and another plunged her wand into the lap of earth and there the god sent up a fount of wine; and all who wished for draughts of milk had but to scratch the soil with their finger-tips and there they had it in abundance, while from every ivy-wreathed staff sweet rills of honey trickled.

Hadst thou been there and seen this, thou wouldst have turned to pray to the god, whom now thou dost disparage. Anon we herdsmen and shepherds met to discuss their strange and wondrous doings; then one, who wandereth oft to town and hath a trick of speech, made harangue in the midst, "O ye who dwell upon the hallowed mountain-terraces! shall we chase Agave, mother of Pentheus, from her Bacchic rites, and thereby do our prince a service?" We liked his speech, and placed ourselves in hidden ambush among the leafy thickets; they at the appointed time began to wave the thyrsus for their Bacchic rites, calling on Iacchus, the Bromian god, the son of Zeus, in united chorus, and the whole mount and the wild creatures re-echoed their cry; all *nature stirred* as they rushed on. Now Agave chanced to

come springing near me, so up I leapt from out my ambush where I lay concealed, meaning to seize her. But she cried out, "What ho! my nimble hounds, here are men upon our track; but follow me, ay, follow, with the thyrsus in your hands for weapon." Thereat we fled, to escape being torn in pieces by the Bacchantes; but they, with hands that bore no weapon of steel, attacked our cattle as they browsed. Then wouldst thou have seen Agave mastering[1] some sleek lowing calf, while others rent the heifers limb from limb. Before thy eyes there would have been hurling of ribs and hoofs this way and that; and strips of flesh, all blood-bedabbled, dripped as they hung from the pine-branches. Wild bulls, that glared but now with rage along their horns, found themselves tripped up, dragged down to earth by countless maidens' hands. The flesh upon their limbs was stripped therefrom quicker than thou couldst have closed[2] thy royal eye-lids. Then off they sped, like birds that skim the air, to the plains beneath the hills, which bear a fruitful harvest for Thebes beside the waters of Asopus; to Hysiae and Erythrae, hamlets 'neath Cithæron's peak, with fell intent, swooping on everything and scattering all pell-mell; and they would snatch children from their homes; but all that they placed upon their shoulders, abode there firmly without being tied, and fell not to the dusky earth,[3] not even brass or iron; and on their hair they carried fire and it burnt them not; but the country-folk rushed to arms, furious at being pillaged by Bacchanals; whereon ensued, O king, this wondrous spectacle. For though the iron-shod dart would draw no blood from them,[4] they with the thyrsus,

[1] *ἔχουσαν ἐν χεροῖν δίκῃ*, so Paley, who explains the latter words as = *ὑποχειρίαν*. Other suggestions are *δίχα* (Scaliger), *ἑλκουσαν δίχα* (Reiske).

[2] *ἢ σὺ ξυνάψαις*, Elmsley.

[3] Some editors suspect a lacuna after this line.

[4] Reading *τὰς*, not *τοῖς*.

which they hurled, caused many a wound and put their foes to utter rout, women chasing men, by some god's intervention. Then they returned to the place whence they had started, even to the springs the god had made to spout for them; and there washed off the blood, while serpents with their tongues were licking clean each gout from their cheeks. Wherefore, my lord and master, receive this deity, whoe'er he be, within the city; for, great as he is in all else, I have likewise heard men say, 'twas he that gave the vine to man, sorrow's antidote. Take wine away and Cypris flies, and every other human joy is dead.

CHO. Though I fear to speak my mind with freedom in the presence of my king, still must I utter this; Dionysus yields to no deity in might.

PEN. Already, look you! the presumption of these Bacchantes is upon[1] us, swift as fire, a sad disgrace in the eyes of all Hellas. No time for hesitation now! away to the Electra gate! order a muster of all my men-at-arms, of those that mount fleet steeds, of all who brandish light bucklers of archers too that make the bowstring twang; for I will march against the Bacchanals. By Heaven! this passes all, if we are to be thus treated by women.

[*Exit* Messenger

DIO. Still obdurate, O Pentheus, after hearing my words In spite of all the evil treatment I am enduring from thee still I warn thee of the sin of bearing arms against a god and bid thee cease; for Bromius will not endure thy driving his votaries from the mountains where they revel.

PEN. A truce to thy preaching to me! thou hast escaped thy bonds, preserve thy liberty; else will I renew thy punishment.

DIO. I would rather do him sacrifice than in a fury kick against the pricks; thou a mortal, he a god.

[1] *ἐφάπτεται*, for which many editors now prefer *ὑφάπτεται*.

PEN. Sacrifice! that will I, by setting afoot a wholesale slaughter of women 'mid Cithæron's glens, as they deserve.

DIO. Ye will all be put to flight,—a shameful thing that they with the Bacchic[1] thyrsus should rout your mail-clad warriors.

PEN. I find this stranger a troublesome foe to encounter; doing or suffering he is alike irrepressible.

DIO. Friend, there is still a way to compose this bitterness.

PEN. Say how; am I to serve my own servants?

DIO. I will bring the women hither without weapons.

PEN. Ha! ha! this is some crafty scheme of thine against me.

DIO. What kind of scheme, if by my craft I purpose to save thee?

PEN. You have combined with them to form this plot, that your revels may go on for ever.

DIO. Nay, but this is the very compact I made with the god; be sure of that.[2]

PEN. (*preparing to start forth.*) Bring forth my arms! Not another word from thee!

DIO. Ha! wouldst thou see them seated on the hills?

PEN. Of all things, yes! I would give untold sums for that.

DIO. Why this sudden, strong desire?

PEN. 'Twill be a bitter sight, if I find them drunk with wine.

DIO. And would that be a pleasant sight which will prove bitter to thee?

PEN. Believe me, yes! beneath the fir-trees as I sit in silence.

[1] Sandys and Wecklein both conjecture Βάκχας, which would at once clear up this doubtful construction.

[2] καὶ μὴν ξυνεθέμην τοῦτό γ', ἴσθι, τῷ θεῷ (Elmsley).

DIO. Nay, they will track thee, though thou come secretly.[1]

PEN. Well, I will go openly; thou wert right to say so.

DIO. Am I to be thy guide? wilt thou essay the road?

PEN. Lead on with all speed, I grudge thee all delay.[2]

DIO. Array thee then in robes of fine linen.

PEN. Why so? Am I to enlist among women after being a man?

DIO. They may kill thee, if thou show thy manhood there.

PEN. Well said! Thou hast given me a taste of thy wit already.

DIO. Dionysus schooled me in this lore.

PEN. How am I to carry out thy wholesome advice?

DIO. Myself will enter thy palace and robe thee.

PEN. What is the robe to be? a woman's? Nay, I am ashamed.

DIO. Thy eagerness to see the Mænads goes no further.

PEN. But what dress dost say thou wilt robe me in?

DIO. Upon thy head will I make thy hair grow long.

PEN. Describe my costume further.

DIO. Thou wilt wear a robe reaching to thy feet; and on thy head shall be a snood.

PEN. Wilt add aught else to my attire?

DIO. A thyrsus in thy hand, and a dappled fawn-skin.

PEN. I can never put on woman's dress.

DIO. Then wilt thou cause bloodshed by coming to blows with the Bacchanals.

PEN. Thou art right. Best go spy upon them first.

DIO. Well, e'en that is wiser than by evil means to follow evil ends.

[1] *κἀν ἔλθῃς λάθρα*, Pierson. Paley suggests as possible *κἂν θέλῃς λαθεῖν*.

[2] *τοῦ χρόνου δέ σοι φθονῶ*. This is Nauck's correction, followed by Sandys.

PEN. But how shall I pass through the city of the Cadmeans unseen?

DIO. We will go by unfrequented paths. I will lead the way.

PEN. Anything rather than that the Bacchantes should laugh at me.

DIO. We[1] will enter the palace and consider the proper steps.

PEN. Thou hast my leave. I am all readiness. I will enter, prepared to set out either sword in hand or following thy advice. [*Exit* PENTHEUS.

DIO. Women! our prize is nearly in the net. Soon shall he reach the Bacchanals, and there pay forfeit with his life. O Dionysus! now 'tis thine to act, for thou art not far away; let us take vengeance on him. First drive him mad by fixing in his soul a wayward frenzy; for never, whilst his senses are his own, will he consent to don a woman's dress; but when his mind is gone astray he will put it on. And fain would I make him a laughing-stock to Thebes as he is led in woman's dress through the city, after those threats with which he menaced[2] me before. But I will go to array Pentheus in those robes which he shall wear when he sets out for Hades' halls, a victim to his own mother's fury; so shall he recognize Dionysus, the son of Zeus, who proves himself at last a god most terrible, for all his gentleness to man.[3] [*Exit* DIONYSUS.

CHO. Will this white foot e'er join the night-long dance? what time in Bacchic ecstasy I toss my neck to heaven's dewy breath, like a fawn, that gambols 'mid the meadow's green delights, when she hath escaped the fearful chase, clear of the watchers, o'er the woven nets; while the huntsman, with

[1] ἰλθόντε . . . βουλεύσομεν (Paley); ἐλθών γ' . . . βουλεύσομαι (Nauck).

[2] αἴσι δεινὸς ἦν, for which Nauck suggests ἃς ἐδέννασεν.

[3] Lines 860 and 861 are thought to be spurious by Kirchhoff and others.

loud halloo, harks on his hounds' full cry, and she with laboured breath at lightning speed bounds o'er the level water-meadows, glad to be far from man amid the foliage of the bosky grove. What is true wisdom, or what fairer boon has heaven placed in mortals' reach, than to gain the mastery o'er a fallen foe? What is fair is dear for aye. Though slow be its advance, yet surely moves the power of the gods, correcting those mortal wights, that court a senseless pride, or, in the madness of their fancy, disregard the gods. Subtly they lie in wait, through the long march of time, and so hunt down the godless man. For it is never right in theory or in practice to o'erride the law of custom. This is a maxim cheaply bought: whatever comes of God, or in time's long annals, has grown into a law upon a natural basis, this is sovereign. What is true wisdom, or what fairer boon has heaven placed in mortals' reach, than to gain the mastery o'er a fallen foe? What is fair is dear for aye. Happy is he who hath escaped the wave from out the sea, and reached the haven; and happy he who hath triumphed o'er his troubles; though one surpasses another in wealth and power; yet there be myriad hopes for all the myriad minds; some end in happiness for man, and others come to naught; but him, whose life from day to day is blest, I deem a happy man.

Dio. Ho! Pentheus, thou that art so eager to see what is forbidden, and to show thy zeal in an unworthy cause, come forth before the palace, let me see thee clad as a woman in frenzied Bacchante's dress, to spy upon thy own mother and her company.

Yes, thou resemblest closely a daughter of Cadmus.

Pen. Of a truth I seem to see two suns, and two towns of Thebes, our seven-gated city; and thou, methinks, art a bull going before to guide me, and on thy head a pair of horns have grown. Wert thou really once a brute beast? Thou hast at any rate the appearance of a bull.

DIO. The god attends us, ungracious heretofore, but now our sworn friend; and now thine eyes behold the things they should.

PEN. Pray, what do I resemble? Is not mine the carriage of Ino, or Agave my own mother?

DIO. In seeing thee, I seem to see them in person. But this tress is straying from its place, no longer as I bound it 'neath the snood.

PEN. I disarranged it from its place as I tossed it to and fro within my chamber, in Bacchic ecstasy.

DIO. Well, I will rearrange it, since to tend thee is my care; hold up thy head.

PEN. Come, put it straight; for on thee do I depend.

DIO. Thy girdle is loose, and the folds of thy dress do not hang evenly below thy ankles.

PEN. I agree to that as regards the right side, but on the other my dress hangs straight with my foot.

DIO. Surely thou wilt rank me first among thy friends, when contrary to thy expectation thou findest the Bacchantes virtuous.

PEN. Shall I hold the thyrsus in the right or left hand to look most like a Bacchanal?

DIO. Hold it in thy right hand, and step out with thy right foot; thy change of mind compels thy praise.

PEN. Shall I be able to carry on my shoulders Cithæron's glens, the Bacchanals [1] and all?

DIO. Yes, if so thou wilt; for though thy mind was erst diseased, 'tis now just as it should be.

PEN. Shall we take levers, or with my hands can I uproot it, thrusting arm or shoulder 'neath its peaks?

DIO. No, no! destroy not the seats of the Nymphs and the haunts of Pan, the place of his piping.

[1] Some editors read *αὐταῖσιν ἐλαταῖς* from a Schol. on Phœn. l. 3, where this reading is given.

PEN. Well said! Women must not be mastered by brute force; amid the pines will I conceal myself.

DIO. Thou shalt hide thee in the place that fate appoints, coming by stealth to spy upon the Bacchanals.

PEN. Why, methinks they are already caught in the pleasant snares of dalliance, like birds amid the brakes.

DIO. Set out with watchful heed then for this very purpose; maybe thou wilt catch them, if thou be not first caught thyself.

PEN. Conduct me through the very heart of Thebes, for I am the only man among them bold enough to do this deed.

DIO. Thou alone bearest thy country's burden, thou and none other; wherefore there await thee such struggles as needs must. Follow me, for I will guide thee safely thither; another shall bring thee thence.

PEN. My mother maybe.

DIO. For every eye to see.

PEN. My very purpose in going.

DIO. Thou shalt be carried back,

PEN. What luxury!

DIO. In thy mother's arms.

PEN. Thou wilt e'en force me into luxury.

DIO. Yes, to luxury such as this.

PEN. Truly,[1] the task I am undertaking deserves it.

[*Exit* PENTHEUS.

DIO. Strange, ah! strange is thy career, leading to scenes of woe so strange, that thou shalt achieve a fame that towers to heaven. Stretch forth thy hands, Agave, and ye her sisters, daughters of Cadmus; mighty is the strife to which I am bringing the youthful king, and the victory shall rest with me and Bromius; all else the event will show.

[*Exit* DIONYSUS.

CHO. To the hills! to the hills! fleet hounds of madness,

[1] Hermann thinks γὰρ should here take the place of μέν.

where the daughters of Cadmus hold their revels, goad them into wild fury against the man disguised in woman's dress, a frenzied spy upon the Mænads. First shall his mother mark him as he peers from some smooth rock or riven tree,[1] and thus to the Mænads she will call, "Who is this of Cadmus' sons comes hasting[2] to the mount, to the mountain away, to spy on us, my Bacchanals? Whose child can he be? For he was never born of woman's blood; but from some lioness maybe or Libyan Gorgon is he sprung." Let justice appear and show herself, sword in hand, to plunge it through and through the throat of the godless, lawless, impious son of Echion, earth's monstrous child! who with wicked heart and lawless rage, with mad intent and frantic purpose, sets out to meddle with thy[3] holy rites, and with thy mother's, Bacchic god, thinking with his weak arm to master might as masterless as thine.[4] This is the life that saves all pain, if a man confine his thoughts to human themes, as is his mortal nature, making no pretence where heaven is concerned.[5] I envy not deep subtleties;[6] far other joys have I, in tracking out great truths writ clear from all eternity, that a man should live his life by day and night in purity and holiness, striving toward a noble goal, and should honour the gods by cast-

[1] *σκόλοπος*; perhaps Hartung's *σκοπέλου* is the right reading.

[2] *οὔριον δρόμον*, the emendation of Hermann for *οὐριοδρόμων*, adopted by Paley. Sandys reads *ὀριδρόμων* with Kirchhoff, a word not given in Liddell and Scott, though twice found in Nonnus.

[3] Reading *περὶ σὰ, Βάκχι', ὄργια ματρός τε σᾶς* (Scaliger).

[4] Reading *σὰν . . . βίαν*. So Thompson for *τὰν . . . βίᾳ*. Paley, reading *τὰν*, refers it to Agave.

[5] The text of these three lines 1002-1004, which are characterized by Elmsley as the most difficult passage in the whole tragedy, is in some way corrupt. Very numerous attempts have been made to emend them; that of Sandys is here followed: *γνώμαν σώφρον', ἃ θνατοῖς ἀπροφασίστοις | εἰς τὰ θεῶν ἔφυ, | βροτείαν τ' ἔχειν ἄλυπος βίος.*

[6] Sandys' text is also followed in this obscure passage, *τὸ σοφὸν οὐ φθονῶ· | χαίρω θηρεύου- | σα τάδ' ἕτερα μεγάλα φανέρ' ἰόντ' ἀεί | ἐπὶ τὰ καλά κ.τ.λ.*

ing from him each ordinance that lies outside the pale of right. Let justice show herself, advancing sword in hand to plunge it through and through the throat of Echion's son, that godless, lawless, and abandoned child of earth! Appear, O Bacchus, to our eyes as a bull or serpent with a hundred heads, or take the shape of a lion breathing flame! Oh! come, and with a mocking smile[1] cast the deadly noose about the hunter[2] of thy Bacchanals, e'en as he swoops[3] upon the Mænads gathered yonder.

MES. O house, so prosperous once through Hellas long ago, home of the old Sidonian prince, who sowed the serpent's crop of earth-born men, how do I mourn thee! slave though I be, yet still the sorrows of his master touch a good slave's heart.[4]

CHO. How now? Hast thou fresh tidings of the Bacchantes?

MES. Pentheus, Echion's son is dead.

CHO. Bromius, my king! now[5] art thou appearing in thy might divine.

MES. Ha! what is it thou sayest? art thou glad, woman, at my master's misfortunes?

CHO. A stranger I, and in foreign tongue I express my joy, for now no more do I cower in terror of the chain.

MES. Dost think Thebes so poor in men * * ?

* * * * * *[6]

CHO. 'Tis Dionysus, Dionysus, not Thebes that lords it over me.

MES. All can I pardon thee save this; to exult o'er hopeless suffering is sorry conduct, dames.

[1] γελῶντι προσώπῳ, probably a gloss on some unusual word now lo

[2] θηραγρευτῇ, Dindorf.

[3] πεσόντι, Scaliger.

[4] Line 1029 is regarded by Dobree as interpolated.

[5] νῦν, inserted by Paley.

[6] Probably the whole of one Iambic line with part of another is lost.

CHO. Tell me, oh! tell me how he died, that villain scheming villainy!

MES. Soon as we had left the homesteads[1] of this Theban land and had crossed the streams of Asopus, we began to breast Cithæron's heights, Pentheus and I, for I went with my master, and the stranger too, who was to guide us to the scene. First then we sat us down in a grassy glen, carefully silencing each footfall and whispered breath, to see without being seen. Now there was a dell walled in by rocks, with rills to water it, and shady pines o'erhead; there were the Mænads seated, busied with joyous toils. Some were wreathing afresh the drooping thyrsus with curling ivy-sprays; others, like colts let loose from the carved chariot-yoke, were answering each other in hymns of Bacchic rapture. But Pentheus, son of sorrow, seeing not the women gathered there, exclaimed, "Sir stranger, from where I stand, I cannot clearly see the mock[2] Bacchantes; but I will climb a hillock or a soaring pine whence to see clearly the shameful doings of the Bacchanals." Then and there I saw the stranger work a miracle; for catching a lofty fir-branch by the very end he drew it downward to the dusky earth, lower yet and ever lower; and like a bow it bent, or rounded wheel, whose curving[3] circle grows complete, as chalk and line describe it; e'en so the stranger drew down the mountain-branch between his hands, bending it to earth, by more than human agency. And when he had seated Pentheus aloft on the pine branches, he let them slip through his hands gently, careful not to shake him from his seat. Up soared the branch straight into the air above, with my master perched thereon, seen by the Mænads better far than he

[1] θεράπνας, regarded by some as a proper name, there being Therapnae in Bœotia.

[2] Reading ὔσσοις νόθων, Tyrrell's emendation,—also approved by Sandys,—of MS. ὅσοι νόθων.

[3] Reading ἑλικοδρόμον with Nauck and Sandys for MS. ἕλκει δρόμον.

saw them; for scarce was he beheld upon his lofty throne, when the stranger disappeared, while from the sky there came a voice,—'twould seem, by Dionysus uttered,—

"Maidens, I bring the man who tried to mock you and me and my mystic rites; take vengeance on him." And as he spake, he raised 'twixt heaven and earth a dazzling column of awful flame. Hushed grew the sky, and still hung each leaf throughout the grassy glen, nor couldst thou have heard one creature cry. But they, not sure of the voice they heard, sprang up and peered all round; then once again his bidding came; and when the daughters of Cadmus knew it was the Bacchic god in very truth that called, swift as doves they darted off in eager haste,[1] his mother Agave and her sisters dear and all the Bacchanals; through torrent glen, o'er boulders huge they bounded on, inspired with madness by the god. Soon as they saw my master perched upon the fir, they set to hurling stones at him with all their might, mounting a commanding eminence, and with pine-branches he was pelted as with darts; and others shot their wands through the air at Pentheus, their hapless target,[2] but all to no purpose. For there he sat beyond the reach of their hot endeavours, a helpless, hopeless victim. At last they rent off limbs from oaks and were for prising up the roots with levers not of iron. But when they still could make no end to all their toil, Agave cried: "Come stand around, and grip the sapling trunk, my Bacchanals! that we may catch the beast that sits thereon, lest he divulge the secrets of our god's religion."

Then were a thousand hands laid on the fir, and from the ground they tore it up, while he from his seat aloft came tumbling to the ground with lamentations long and loud, e'en Pentheus; for well he knew his hour was come. His mother first, a priestess for the nonce, began the bloody

[1] Line 1091 is perhaps an interpolation. Hartung reads *τρέχουσαι*.

[2] *στόχον*, so Reiske for *τ' ὄχον*.

deed and fell upon him; whereon he tore the snood from off his hair, that hapless Agave might recognize and spare him, crying as he touched her cheek, "O mother! it is I, thy own son Pentheus, the child thou didst bear in Echion's halls; have pity on me, mother dear! oh! do not for any sin of mine slay thy own son."

But she, the while, with foaming mouth and wildly rolling eyes, bereft of reason as she was, heeded him not; for the god possessed her. And she caught his left hand in her grip, and planting her foot upon her victim's trunk she tore the shoulder from its socket, not of her own strength, but the god made it an easy task to her hands; and Ino set to work upon the other side, rending the flesh with Autonoe and all the eager host of Bacchanals; and one united cry arose, the victim's groans while yet he breathed, and their triumphant shouts. One would make an arm her prey, another a foot with the sandal on it; and his ribs were stripped of flesh by their rending nails; and each one with blood-dabbled hands was tossing Pentheus' limbs about. Scattered lies his corpse, part beneath the rugged[1] rocks, and part amid the deep dark woods, no easy task to find; but his poor head hath his mother made her own, and fixing it upon the point of a thyrsus, as it had been a mountain lion's, she bears it through the midst of Cithæron, having left her sisters with the Mænads at their rites. And she is entering these walls exulting in her hunting fraught with woe, calling on the Bacchic god her fellow-hunter who had helped her to triumph in a chase, where her only prize was tears.

But I will get me hence, away from this piteous scene, before Agave reach the palace. To my mind self-restraint and reverence for the things of God point alike[2] the best and wisest course for all mortals who pursue them.

[*Exit* Messenger.

[1] *στίφλοις*, Barnes. [2] Reading *κάλλιστον οἶμαι ταὐτὸ* (Reiske).

CHO. Come, let us exalt our Bacchic god in choral strain, let us loudly chant the fall of Pentheus from the serpent sprung, who assumed a woman's dress and took the fair Bacchic wand, sure pledge of death,[1] with a bull to guide him to his doom. O ye Bacchanals of Thebes! glorious is the triumph ye[2] have achieved, ending in sorrow and tears. 'Tis a noble enterprise to dabble the hand in the blood of a son till it drips. But hist! I see Agave, the mother of Pentheus, with wild rolling eye hasting to the house; welcome the revellers of the Bacchic god.

AGA. Ye Bacchanals from Asia!

CHO. Why dost thou rouse[3] me? why?

AGA. From the hills I am bringing to my home a tendril freshly-culled, glad guerdon of the chase.

CHO. I see it, and I will welcome thee unto our revels. All hail!

AGA. I caught him with never a snare, this lion's whelp,[4] as ye may see.

CHO. From what desert lair?

AGA. Cithæron——

CHO. Yes, Cithæron?

AGA. Was his death.

CHO. Who was it gave the first blow?

AGA. Mine that privilege; "Happy Agave!" they call me 'mid our revellers.

CHO. Who did the rest?

AGA. Cadmus ——

CHO. What of him?

AGA. His daughters struck the monster after me; yes, after me.

[1] *πιστὸν Ἄιδαν.* The words are perhaps corrupt; there are numerous corrections proposed.

[2] *ἐξεπράξατε*, Scaliger. [3] *ὀροθύνεις*, Hermann's correction for *ὀρθεῖς*.

[4] Something has been lost here, which has not yet been satisfactorily supplied. *λέοντος – ⏑⏑ – νέον ἰνιν* is Wecklein's reading.

CHO. Fortune smiled upon thy hunting here.

AGA. Come, share the banquet.

CHO. Share? ah! what?

AGA. 'Tis but a tender whelp, the down just sprouting on its cheek beneath a crest of falling hair.

CHO. The hair is like some wild creature's.

AGA. The Bacchic god, a hunter skilled, roused his Mænads to pursue this quarry skilfully.

CHO. Yea, our king is a hunter indeed.

AGA. Dost approve?

CHO. Of course I do.

AGA. Soon shall the race of Cadmus——

CHO. And Pentheus, her own son, shall to his mother—

AGA. Offer praise for this her quarry of the lion's brood.

CHO. Quarry strange!

AGA. And strangely caught.

CHO. Dost thou exult?

AGA. Right glad am I to have achieved a great and glorious triumph for my land that all can see.

CHO. Alas for thee! show to the folk the booty thou hast won and art bringing hither.

AGA. All ye who dwell in fair fenced Thebes, draw near! that ye may see the fierce wild beast that we daughters of Cadmus made our prey, not with the thong-thrown darts of Thessaly, nor yet with snares, but with our fingers fair. Ought men idly to boast and get them armourers' weapons? when we with these our hands have caught this prey and torn the monster limb from limb? Where is my aged sire? let him approach. And where is Pentheus, my son? Let him bring a ladder and raise it against the house to nail up on the gables[1] this lion's head, my booty from the chase.

[1] Liddell and Scott say that this word originally meant the projecting end of the beam; so that perhaps our word "gable" is the nearest modern approach to it.

CAD. Follow me, servants to the palace-front, with your sad burden in your arms, ay, follow, with the corpse of Pentheus, which after long weary search I found, as ye see it, torn to pieces amid Cithæron's glens, and am bringing hither; no two pieces did I find together, as they lay scattered through the trackless wood.[1] For I heard what awful deeds one of my daughters had done, just as I entered the city-walls with old Teiresias returning from the Bacchanals;[2] so I turned again unto the hill and bring from thence my son who was slain by Mænads. There I saw Autonoe, that bare Actæon on a day to Aristaeus, and Ino with her, still ranging the oak-groves in their unhappy frenzy; but one told me that that other, Agave, was rushing wildly hither, nor was it idly said, for there I see her,[3] sight of woe!

AGA. Father, loudly mayst thou boast, that the daughters thou hast begotten are far the best of mortal race; of one and all I speak, though chiefly of myself, who left my shuttle at the loom for nobler enterprise, even to hunt savage beasts with my hands; and in my arms I bring my prize, as thou seest, that it may be nailed up on thy palace-wall; take it, father, in thy hands, and proud of my hunting, call thy friends to a banquet; for blest art thou, ah! doubly blest in these our gallant exploits.

CAD. O grief that has no bounds, too cruel for mortal eye! 'tis murder ye have done with your hapless hands. Fair is the victim thou hast offered to the gods, inviting me and my Thebans to the feast! Ah, woe is me! first for thy sorrows, then for mine. What ruin the god, the Bromian king, hath brought on us, just maybe, but too severe, seeing he is our kinsman!

AGA. How peevish old age makes men! what sullen looks! Oh, may my son follow in his mother's footsteps

[1] Nauck incloses this line in brackets as suspicious.
[2] *βακχῶν πάρα*, Musgrave.
[3] *αὐτὴν*, Scaliger.

and be as lucky in his hunting, when he goes in quest of game in company with Theban youths! But he can do naught but wage war with gods. Father, 'tis thy duty [and mine, too,] to warn him [against finding pleasure in mischievous conceits.[1] Where is he?] Who will summon him hither to my sight to witness my happiness?

CAD. Alas for you! alas! Terrible will be your grief when ye are conscious of your deeds; could ye remain for ever till life's close in your present state, ye would not, spite of ruined bliss, appear so cursed with woe.

AGA. Why? what is faulty here? what here for sorrow?

CAD. First let thine eye look up to heaven.

AGA. See! I do so. Why dost thou suggest my looking thereupon?

CAD. Is it still the same, or dost think there's any change?

AGA. 'Tis brighter than it was, and clearer too.

CAD. Is there still that wild unrest within thy soul?

AGA. I know not what thou sayest now; yet methinks my brain is clearing, and my former frenzy passed away.

CAD. Canst understand, and give distinct replies?

AGA. Father, how completely I forget all we said before!

CAD. To what house wert thou brought with marriage-hymns?

AGA. Thou didst give me to earthborn Echion, as men call him.

CAD. What child was born thy husband in his halls?

AGA. Pentheus, of my union with his father.

CAD. What head is that thou barest in thy arms?

AGA. A lion's; at least they said so, who hunted it.

CAD. Consider it aright; 'tis no great task to look at it.

AGA. Ah! what do I see? what is this I am carrying in my hands?

[1] Line 1257 is almost certainly an interpolation. Nauck's reading, now generally accepted in 1258 is *σοὐστίν, i.e., σοὶ ἐστίν* for *ποῦ 'στιν.*

CAD. Look closely at it; make thy knowlege more certain.

AGA. Ah, woe is me! O sight of awful sorrow!

CAD. Dost think it like a lion's head?

AGA. Ah no! 'tis Pentheus' head which I his unhappy mother hold.

CAD. Bemoaned[1] by me, or ever thou didst recognize him.

AGA. Who slew him? How came he into my hands?

CAD. O piteous truth! how ill-timed thy presence here!

AGA. Speak; my bosom throbs at this suspense.

CAD. 'Twas thou didst slay him, thou and thy sisters.

AGA. Where died he? in the house or where?

CAD. On the very spot where hounds of yore rent Actæon in pieces.

AGA. Why went he, wretched youth! to Cithæron?

CAD. He would go and mock the god and thy Bacchic rites.

AGA. But how was it we had journeyed thither?

CAD. Ye were distraught; the whole city had the Bacchic frenzy.

AGA. 'Twas Dionysus proved our ruin; now I see it all.

CAD. Yes, for the slight he suffered; ye would not believe in his godhead.

AGA. Father, where is my dear child's corpse?

CAD. With toil I searched it out and am bringing it myself.

AGA. Is it all fitted limb to limb in seemly wise?

CAD.[2] * * * * *

AGA. But what had Pentheus to do with folly of mine?

CAD. He was like you in refusing homage to the god, who, therefore, hath involved you all in one common ruin, you and him alike, to destroy this house and me, forasmuch as I, that had no sons, behold this youth, the fruit of thy womb,

[1] ᾠμωγμένον.

[2] One line, if not more, is wanting here.

unhappy mother! foully and most shamefully slain. To thee, my child, our house looked up, to thee my daughter's son, the stay of my palace, inspiring the city with awe; none caring to flout the old king when he saw thee by, for he would get[1] his deserts. But now shall I be cast out dishonoured from my halls, Cadmus the great, who sowed the crop of Theban seed and reaped that goodly harvest. O beloved child! dead though thou art, thou still shalt be counted by me amongst my own dear children; no more wilt thou lay thy hand upon my chin in fond embrace, my child, and calling on thy mother's sire demand, "Who wrongs thee or dishonours thee, old sire? who vexes thy heart, a thorn within thy side? Speak, that I may punish thy oppressor, father mine!"

But now am I in sorrow plunged, and woe is thee, and woe thy mother and her suffering sisters too! Ah! if there be any man that scorns the gods, let him well mark this prince's death and then believe in them.

Cho. Cadmus, I am sorry for thy fate; for though thy daughter's child hath met but his deserts, 'tis bitter grief to thee.

Aga. O father, thou seest how sadly my fortune is changed.[2]

* * * * *

Dio. * * * * *

Thou shalt be changed into a serpent; and thy wife Harmonia, Ares' child, whom thou in thy human life didst wed, shall change her nature for a snake's, and take its form. With her shalt thou, as leader of barbarian tribes,[3] drive thy

[1] ἐλάμβανεν is the MS. reading, but ἐλάμβανες = "thou wouldst exact vengeance" (Hermann) is preferable.

[2] After this line a very large lacuna occurs in the MS., which Kirchhoff has endeavoured to piece together from the "Christus Patiens." (Cf. Sandys *ad loc.*)

[3] Cadmus led the Encheleis (*snake-tribe*) against the Illyrians, driving in a chariot drawn by oxen.

team of steers, so saith an oracle of Zeus; and many a city shalt thou sack with an army numberless; but in the day they plunder the oracle of Loxias, shall they rue their homeward march; but thee and Harmonia will Ares rescue, and set thee to live henceforth in the land of the blessed. This do I declare, I Dionysus, son of no mortal father but of Zeus. Had ye learnt wisdom when ye would not, ye would now[1] be happy with the son of Zeus for your ally.

AGA. O Dionysus! we have sinned; thy pardon we implore.

DIO. Too late have ye learnt to know me; ye knew me not at the proper time.

AGA. We recognize our error; but thou art too revengeful.

DIO. Yea, for I, though a god, was slighted by you.

AGA. Gods should not let their passion sink to man's level.

DIO. Long ago my father Zeus ordained it thus.

AGA. Alas! my aged sire, our doom is fixed; 'tis woful exile.

DIO. Why then delay the inevitable?

CAD. Daughter, to what an awful pass are we now come, [thou too, poor child, and thy sisters,[2]] while I alas! in my old age must seek barbarian shores, to sojourn there; but the oracle declares that I shall yet lead an army, half-barbarian, half-Hellene, to Hellas; and in serpent's shape shall I carry my wife Harmonia, the daughter of Ares, transformed like me to a savage snake, against the altars and tombs of Hellas at the head of my troops; nor shall I ever cease from my woes, ah me! nor ever cross the downward stream of Acheron and be at rest.

[1] *εὐδαιμονεῖτ' ἄν*, Musgrave.

[2] Paley regards this line as spurious, and, like Wecklein, suspects a lacuna after it. Indeed the whole passage is so very obscure that there *is probably* extensive corruption.

AGA. Father, I shall be parted from thee and exiled.

CAD. Alas! my child, why fling thy arms around me, as a snowy cygnet folds its wings about the frail old swan?[1]

AGA. Whither can I turn, an exile from my country?

CAD. I know not, my daughter; small help is thy father now.

AGA. Farewell, my home! farewell, my native city! with sorrow I am leaving thee, an exile from my bridal bower.

CAD. Go, daughter, to the [house] of Aristæus,[2]

* * * * *

AGA. Father, I mourn for thee.

CAD. And I for thee, my child; for thy sisters too I shed a tear.

AGA. Ah! terribly was king Dionysus bringing this outrage on thy house.

CAD. Yea, for he suffered insults dire from you, his name receiving no meed of honour in Thebes.

AGA. Farewell, father mine!

CAD. Farewell, my hapless daughter! and yet thou scarce canst reach that bourn.[3]

AGA. Oh! lead me, guide me to the place where I shall find my sisters, sharers in my exile to their sorrow! Oh! to reach a spot where cursed Cithæron ne'er shall see me more nor I Cithæron with mine eyes; where no memorial of the thyrsus is set up! Be they to other Bacchantes dear!

CHO. Many are the forms the heavenly will assumes, and many a thing the gods fulfil contrary to all hope; that which was expected is not brought to pass, while for the unlooked-for Heaven finds out a way. E'en such hath been the issue here.

[1] ὄρνιν ὥπως κηφῆνα πολιόχρως κύκνος (Paley).

[2] Another lacuna follows (Hermann). Nauck regards the whole passage from 1371 to 1392 as spurious; Kirchhoff, as very corrupt.

[3] *i.e.*, τὸ χαίρειν = "faring well."

HECUBA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE GHOST OF POLYDORE.
HECUBA.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN WOMEN.
POLYXENA.
ODYSSEUS.
TALTHYBIUS.
MAID.
AGAMEMNON.
POLYMESTOR, AND HIS CHILDREN.

SCENE.—Before Agamemnon's tent upon the shore of the Thracian Chersonese.

GHOST. Lo! I am come from out the charnel-house and gates of gloom, where Hades dwells apart from gods, I Polydore, a son of Hecuba the daughter of Cisseus and of Priam. Now my father, when Phrygia's capital was threatened with destruction by the spear of Hellas, took alarm and conveyed me secretly from the land of Troy unto Polymestor's house, his friend in Thrace, who sows these[1] fruitful plains of Chersonese, curbing by his might a nation delighting in horses. And with me my father sent great store of gold by stealth, that, if ever Ilium's walls should fall, his children that survived might not want for means to live. I was the youngest of Priam's sons; and this it was that caused my stealthy removal from the land; for my childish arm availed not to carry weapons or to wield the spear. So long then as the bulwarks of our land stood firm, and Troy's battlements abode unshaken, and my brother Hector prospered in his warring, I, poor child, grew up and flourished, like some vigorous shoot, at the court of the Thracian, my father's friend. But when Troy fell and Hector lost his life and my father's hearth was rooted up, and himself fell butchered at the god-built altar by the hands of Achilles' murderous son; then did my father's friend slay me his helpless guest for the sake of the gold, and thereafter cast me into the swell of the sea, to keep the gold for himself in his house. And there I lie one time upon the strand, another in the salt sea's surge, drifting ever

[1] τήνδ', Hermann for τὴν.

up and down upon the billows, unwept, unburied; but now am I hovering o'er the head of my dear mother Hecuba, a disembodied spirit, keeping my airy station these three days, ever since my poor mother came from Troy to linger here in Chersonese. Meantime all the Achæans sit idly here in their ships at the shores of Thrace; for the son of Peleus, even Achilles, appeared above his tomb and stayed the whole host of Hellas, as they were making straight for home across the sea, demanding to have my sister Polyxena offered at his tomb, and to receive his guerdon.[1] And he will obtain this prize, nor will they that are his friends refuse the gift; and on this very day is fate leading my sister to her doom. So will my mother see two children dead at once, me and that ill-fated maid. For I, to win a grave, ah me! will appear amid the rippling waves before her bond-maid's feet.[2] Yes! I have won this boon from the powers below, that I should find a tomb and fall into my mother's hands; so shall I get my heart's desire; wherefore I will go and waylay aged Hecuba, for yonder she passeth on her way from the shelter of Agamemnon's tent, terrified at my spectre. Woe is thee! ah, mother mine! from a palace dragged to face a life of slavery! how sad thy lot, as sad as once 'twas blest! Some god is now destroying thee, setting this in the balance to outweigh thy former bliss.

[Ghost *vanishes.*

Hec. Guide these aged steps, my servants, forth before the house; support your fellow-slave, your queen of yore, ye maids of Troy. Take hold upon my aged hand, support me, guide me, lift me up; and I will lean upon your bended arm as on a staff and quicken my halting footsteps onwards. O dazzling light of Zeus! O gloom of night! why am I thus

[1] Polyxena is said in the Greek argument to this play to have been betrothed to Achilles.

[2] The corpse is found by a slave-girl (cf. l. 780) who had gone to fetch water.

scared by fearful visions of the night? O earth, dread queen, mother of dreams that flit on sable wings! I am seeking to avert the vision of the night, the sight of horror which I saw so clearly in my dreams touching my son, who is safe in Thrace, and Polyxena my daughter dear. Ye gods of this land! preserve my son, the last and only anchor of my house,[1] now settled in Thrace, the land of snow, safe in the keeping of his father's friend. Some fresh disaster is in store, a new strain of sorrow will be added to our woe. Such ceaseless thrills of terror never wrung my heart before. Oh! where, ye Trojan maidens, can I find inspired Helenus or Cassandra, that they may read me my dream? For I saw a dappled hind mangled by a wolf's bloody fangs,[2] torn from my knees by force in piteous wise. And this too filled me with affright; o'er the summit of his tomb appeared Achilles' phantom, and for his guerdon he would have one of the luckless maids of Troy. Wherefore, I implore you, powers divine, avert this horror from my daughter, from my child.

CHO. Hecuba, I have hastened away to thee, leaving my master's tent, where the lot assigned me as his appointed slave, in the day that I was driven from the city of Ilium, hunted by Achæans thence at the point of the spear; no alleviation bring I for thy sufferings; nay, I have laden myself with heavy news, and am a herald of sorrow to thee, lady. 'Tis said the Achæans have determined in full assembly to offer thy daughter in sacrifice to Achilles; for thou knowest how one day he appeared standing on his tomb in golden harness, and stayed the sea-borne barques, though they had their sails already hoisted, with this pealing cry, "Whither away so fast, ye Danai, leaving my tomb without its prize?" Thereon arose a violent dispute with stormy altercation, and opinion was divided in the

[1] ὃς μόνος οἴκων ἄγκυρ' ἔτ' ἐμῶν (Paley).

[2] χαλᾷ. Hesychius gives γνάθῳ as an equivalent here.

warrior host of Hellas, some being in favour of offering the sacrifice at the tomb, others dissenting. There was Agamemnon, all eagerness in thy interest, because of his love for the frenzied prophetess; but the two sons of Theseus, scions of Athens, though supporting different proposals, yet agreed on the same decision, which was to crown Achilles' tomb with fresh-spilt blood; for they said they never would set Cassandra's love before Achilles' valour. Now the zeal of the rival disputants was almost equal, until that shifty, smooth-mouthed varlet, the son of Laértes, whose tongue is ever at the service of the mob, persuaded the army not to put aside the best of all the Danai for want of a bond-maid's sacrifice, nor have it said by any of the dead that stand beside Persephone, "The Danai have left the plains of Troy without one thought of gratitude for their brethren who died for Hellas." Odysseus will be here in an instant, to drag the tender maiden from thy breast and tear her from thy aged arms. To the temples, to the alters with thee! at Agamemnon's knees throw thyself as a suppliant! Invoke alike the gods in heaven and those beneath the earth. For either shall thy prayers avail to spare thee the loss of thy unhappy child, or thou must live to see thy daughter fall before the tomb, her crimson blood spurting in deep dark jets from her neck with gold encircled.

HEC. Woe, woe is me! What words, or cries, or lamentations can I utter? Ah me! for the sorrows of my closing years! for slavery too cruel to brook or bear! Woe, woe is me! What champion have I? Sons, and city—where are they? Aged Priam is no more; no more my children now. Which way am I to go, or this or that? Whither shall I turn my steps? Where is any god or power divine to succour me? Ah, Trojan maids! bringers of evil tidings! messengers of woe! ye have made an end, an utter end of me; life on earth has no more charm for me. Ah! luckless

steps, lead on, guide your aged mistress to yon tent. My child, come forth; come forth, thou daughter of the queen of sorrows; listen to thy mother's voice, my child, that thou mayst know the hideous rumour I now hear about thy life.

POL. O mother, mother mine! why dost thou call so loud? what news is it thou hast proclaimed, scaring me, like a cowering bird, from my chamber by this alarm?

HEC. Alas, my daughter!

POL. Why this ominous address? it bodeth sorrow for me.

HEC. Woe for thy life!

POL. Tell all, hide it no longer. Ah mother! how I dread, ay dread the import of thy loud laments.

HEC. Ah my daughter! a luckless mother's child!

POL. Why dost thou tell me this?

HEC. The Argives with one consent are eager for thy sacrifice to the son of Peleus[1] at his tomb.

POL. Ah! mother mine! how canst thou speak of such a dire mischance? Yet tell me all, yes all, O mother dear!

HEC. 'Tis a rumour ill-boding I tell, my child; they bring me word that sentence is passed upon thy life by the Argives' vote.

POL. Alas, for thy cruel sufferings! my persecuted mother! woe for thy life of grief! What grievous outrage some fiend hath sent on thee, hateful, horrible! No more shall I thy daughter share thy bondage, hapless youth on hapless age attending. For thou, alas! wilt see thy hapless child torn from thy arms, as a calf of the hills is torn from its mother, and sent beneath the darkness of the earth with severed throat for Hades, where with the dead shall I be laid, ah me! For thee I weep with plaintive wail, mother doomed to a life of sorrow! for my own life, its ruin and

[1] Of the numerous attempts to explain Πηλείδα γεννα or ᾳ none appears satisfactory. Weil's correction Πηλείᾳ γέννᾳ is here followed.

its outrage, never a tear I shed; nay, death is become to me a happier lot than life.

CHO. See where Odysseus comes in haste, to announce some fresh command to thee, Hecuba.

ODY. Lady, methinks thou knowest already the intention of the host, and the vote that has been passed; still will I declare it. It is the Achæans' will to sacrifice thy daughter Polyxena at the mound heaped o'er Achilles' grave; and they appoint me to take the maid and bring her thither, while the son of Achilles is chosen to preside o'er the sacrifice and act as priest. Dost know then what to do? Be not forcibly torn from her, nor match thy might 'gainst mine; recognize the limits of thy strength, and the presence of thy troubles. Even in adversity 'tis wise to yield to reason's dictates.

HEC. Ah me! an awful trial is nigh, it seems, fraught with mourning, rich in tears. Yes, I too escaped death where death had been my due, and Zeus destroyed me not but is still preserving my life, that I may witness in my misery fresh sorrows surpassing all before. Still if the bond may ask the free of things that grieve them not nor wrench their heart-strings, 'tis well that thou shouldst make an end and hearken to my questioning.[1]

ODY. Granted; put thy questions; that short delay I grudge thee not.

HEC. Dost remember the day thou camest to spy on Ilium, disguised in rags and tatters, while down thy cheek ran drops of blood?

ODY. Remember it! yes; 'twas no slight impression it made upon my heart.

HEC. Did Helen recognize thee and tell me only?

[1] This is Hermann's view of this difficult passage; but Paley interprets thus: "it is to you that our words must be spoken, and it is for us who ask to hear your reply;" and this is the explanation given by the Schol.

ODY. I well remember the awful risk I ran.

HEC. Didst thou embrace my knees in all humility?

ODY. Yea, so that my hand grew dead and cold upon thy robe.

HEC. What saidst thou then, when in my power?

ODY. Doubtless I found plenty to say, to save my life.

HEC. Was it I that saved and sent thee forth again?

ODY. Thou didst, and so I still behold the light of day.

HEC. Art not thou then playing a sorry part to plot against me thus, after the kind treatment thou didst by thy own confession receive from me, showing me no gratitude but all the ill thou canst? A thankless race! all ye who covet honour from the mob for your oratory. Oh that ye were unknown to me! ye who harm your friends and think no more of it, if ye can but say a word to win the mob. But tell me, what kind of cleverness did they think it, when against this child they passed their bloody vote? Was it duty[1] led them to slay a human victim at the tomb, where sacrifice of oxen more befits? or does Achilles, if claiming the lives of those who slew him as his recompense, show his justice by marking her out for death? No! she at least ne'er injured him. He should have demanded Helen as a victim at his tomb, for she it was that proved his ruin, bringing him to Troy; or if some captive of surpassing beauty was to be singled out for doom, this pointed not to us; for the daughter of Tyndareus was fairer than all womankind, and her injury to him was proved no less than ours. Against the justice of his plea I pit this argument. Now hear the recompense due from thee to me at my request. On thy own confession, thou didst fall at my feet and embrace my hand and aged cheek; I in my turn now do the same to thee, and claim the favour then bestowed; and I implore thee, tear not my child from my arms, nor slay her. There be dead enough; she is my

[1] τὸ χρῆν. Nauck prefers τὸ χρή.

only joy, in her I forget my sorrows;[1] my one comfort she in place of many a loss, my city[2] and my nurse, my staff and journey's guide. 'Tis never right that those in power should use it out of season, or when prosperous suppose they will be always so. For I like them was prosperous once, but now my life is lived, and one day robbed me of all my bliss. Friend, by thy beard, have some regard and pity for me; go to Achæa's host, and talk them over, saying how hateful a thing it is to slay women whom at first ye spared out of pity, after dragging them from the altars. For amongst you the self-same law holds good for bond and free alike respecting bloodshed; such influence as thine will persuade them even though thy[3] words are weak; for the same argument, when proceeding from those of no account, has not the same force as when it is uttered by men of mark.

CHO. Human nature is not[4] so stony-hearted as to hear thy plaintive tale and catalogue of sorrows, without shedding a tear.

ODY. O Hecuba! be schooled by me, nor in thy passion count him a foe who speaketh wisely. Thy life I am prepared to save, for the service I received; I say no otherwise. But what I said to all, I will not now deny, that after Troy's capture I would give thy daughter to the chiefest of our host because he asked a victim. For herein is a source of weakness to most states, whene'er a man of brave and generous soul receives no greater honour than his inferiors. Now Achilles, lady, deserves honour at our hands, since for Hellas he died as nobly as a mortal can. Is not this a foul reproach to treat a man as a friend in life, but, when he is gone[5] from

[1] Nauck brackets this line as suspicious.

[2] πόλις, for which Weil proposes βίος, Czwalina, πολιᾶς.

[3] λέγῃς; so Porson and Dindorf after Muretus.

[4] οὐκ ἔστιν, Porson τίς ἔστιν, from Gregory of Corinth.

[5] ἄπεστι. Porson and Nauck retain the old reading, ὄλωλε, which is thought to be a gloss.

us, to treat him so no more? How now? what will they say, if once more there comes a gathering of the host and a contest with the foe? "Shall we fight or nurse our lives, seeing the dead have no honours?" For myself, indeed, though in life my daily store were scant, yet would it be all-sufficient, but as touching a tomb I should wish mine to be an object of respect, for this gratitude has long to run. Thou speakest of cruel sufferings; hear my answer. Amongst us are aged dames and grey old men no less miserable than thou, and brides of gallant husbands reft, o'er whom this Trojan dust has closed. Endure these sorrows; for us, if we are wrong in resolving to honour the brave, we shall bring upon ourselves a charge of ignorance; but as for you barbarians, regard not your friends as such and pay no homage to your gallant dead, that Hellas may prosper and ye may reap the fruits of such policy.

CHO. Alas! how cursed is slavery alway in its nature,[1] forced by the might of the stronger to endure unseemly treatment.

HEC. Daughter, my pleading to avert thy bloody death was wasted idly on the air; do thou, if in aught endowed with greater power to move than thy mother, make haste to use it, uttering every pleading note like the tuneful nightingale, to save thy soul from death. Throw thyself at Odysseus' knees to move his pity, and try to move him. Here is thy plea: he too hath children, so that he can feel for thy sad fate.

POL. Odysseus, I see thee hiding thy right hand beneath thy robe and turning away thy face, that I may not touch thy beard. Take heart; thou art safe from the suppliant's god in my case, for I will follow thee, alike because I must and because it is my wish to die; for were I loth, a coward should I show myself, a woman faint of heart. Why should I prolong my days? I whose sire was king of all the Phrygians?—

[1] πέφυκ' ἀεί, τολμᾷ θ'.

my chiefest pride in life. Then was I nursed on fair fond hopes to be a bride for kings, the centre of keen jealousy amongst suitors, to see whose home I would make my own; and o'er each dame of Ida I was queen; ah me! a maiden marked amid her fellows,[1] equal to a goddess, save for death alone, but now a slave! That name first makes me long for death, so strange it sounds; and then maybe my lot might give me to some savage master, one that would buy me for money,—me the sister of Hector and many another chief,[2]—who would make me knead him bread within his halls, or sweep his house or set me working at the loom, leading a life of misery; while some slave, bought I know not whence, will taint my maiden charms, once deemed worthy of royalty. No, never! Here I close my eyes upon the light, free as yet, and dedicate myself to Hades. Lead me hence, Odysseus, and do thy worst, for I see naught within my reach to make me hope or expect with any confidence that I am ever again to be happy. Mother mine! seek not to hinder me by word or deed, but join in my wish for death ere I meet with shameful treatment undeserved. For whoso is not used to taste of sorrow's cup, though he bears it, yet it galls him when he puts his neck within the yoke; far happier would he be dead than alive, for life of honour reft is toil and trouble.[3]

CHO. A wondrous mark, most clearly stamped, doth noble birth imprint on men, and the name goeth still further where it is deserved.[4]

HEC. A noble speech, my daughter! but there is sorrow linked with its noble sentiments.

[1] παρθένοις, some copies insert τ'.

[2] Herwerden reads πρώμων. The line is perhaps spurious.

[3] Nauck brackets line 378 as suspicious.

[4] *i.e.*, to have the name of *nobly-born* is something; but where one is noble in nature too, and so worthy of the name, his nobility is content with the mere title but shows itself in action.

Odysseus, if ye must pleasure the son of Peleus, and avoid reproach, slay not this maid, but lead me to Achilles' pyre and torture me unsparingly; 'twas I that bore Paris, whose fatal shaft laid low the son of Thetis.

ODY. 'Tis not thy death, old dame, Achilles' wraith hath demanded of the Achæans, but hers.

HEC. At least then slaughter me with my child; so shall there be a double draught of blood for the earth and the dead that claims this sacrifice.

ODY. The maiden's death suffices; no need to add a second to the first; would we needed not e'en this!

HEC. Die with my daughter I must and will.

ODY. How so? I did not know I had a master.

HEC. I will cling to her like ivy to an oak.

ODY. Not if thou wilt hearken to those who are wiser than thyself.

HEC. Be sure I will never willingly relinquish my child.

ODY. Well, be equally sure I will never go away and leave her here.

POL. Mother, hearken to me; and thou, son of Laertes, make allowance for a parent's natural wrath. My poor mother, fight not with our masters. Wilt thou be thrown down, be roughly thrust aside and wound thy aged skin, and in unseemly wise be torn from me by youthful arms? This wilt thou suffer; do not so, for 'tis not right for thee. Nay, dear mother mine! give me thy hand beloved, and let me press thy cheek to mine; for never, nevermore, but now for the last time shall I behold the dazzling sun-god's orb. My last farewells now take! O mother, mother mine! beneath the earth I pass.

HEC. O my daughter, I am still to live and be a slave.

POL. Unwedded I depart, never having tasted the married joys that were my due!

HEC. Thine, my daughter, is a piteous lot, and sad is mine also.

POL. There in Hades' courts shall I be laid apart from thee.

HEC. Ah me, what shall I do? where shall I end my life?

POL. Daughter of a free-born sire, a slave I am to die.

HEC. Not one of all my fifty children left!

POL. What message can I take for thee to Hector or thy aged lord?

HEC. Tell them that of all women I am the most miserable.

POL. Ah! breast and paps that fed me with sweet food!

HEC. Woe is thee, my child, for this untimely fate!

POL. Farewell, my mother! farewell, Cassandra!

HEC. "Fare well!" others do, but not thy mother, no!

POLY. Thou too, my brother Polydore, who art in Thrace, the home of steeds!

HEC. Aye, if he lives, which much I doubt; so luckless am I every way.

POL. Oh yes, he lives; and, when thou diest, he will close thine eyes.

HEC. I *am* dead; sorrow has forestalled death here.

POL. Come veil my head, Odysseus, and take me hence; for now, ere falls the fatal blow, my heart is melted by my mother's wailing, and hers no less by mine. O light of day! for still may I call thee by thy name, though now my share in thee is but the time I take to go 'twixt this and the sword at Achilles' tomb. [*Exeunt* ODYSSEUS *and* POLYXENA.

HEC. Woe is me! I faint; my limbs sink under me. O my daughter, embrace thy mother, stretch out thy hand, give it me again; leave me not childless! Ah, friends! 'tis my death-blow. [*She swoons.*] [Oh! to see that Spartan woman, Helen, sister of the sons of Zeus, in such a plight; for her bright eyes have caused the shameful fall of Troy's once prosperous town.[1]]

[1] These lines cannot very well belong to Hecuba, who has already fainted. Hermann assigns them to the Chorus; Dindorf rejects them; Paley favours the latter view.

CHO. O breeze from out the deep arising, that waftest swift galleys, ocean's coursers, across the surging main! whither wilt thou bear me the child of sorrow? To whose house shall I be brought, to be his slave and chattel? to some haven in the Dorian land,[1] or in Phthia, where men say Apidanus, father of fairest streams, makes fat and rich the tilth? or to an island home, sent on a voyage of misery by oars that sweep the brine, leading a wretched existence in halls where[2] the first-created palm and the bay-tree put forth their sacred shoots for dear Latona, memorial fair of her divine travail? and there with the maids of Delos shall I hymn the golden snood and bow of Artemis their goddess? or in the city of Pallas, the home of Athena[3] of the beauteous chariot, shall I upon her saffron robe[4] yoke horses to the car, embroidering them on my web in brilliant varied shades, or the race of Titans, whom Zeus the son of Cronos lays to their unending sleep with bolt of flashing flame?

Woe is me for my children! woe for my ancestors, and my country which is falling in smouldering ruin 'mid the smoke, sacked by the Argive spear! while I upon a foreign shore am called a slave forsooth, leaving Asia, Europe's handmaid,[5] and receiving in its place a deadly marriage-bower.[6]

TAL. Where can I find Hecuba, who once was queen of Ilium, ye Trojan maidens?

CHO. There she lies near thee, Talthybius, stretched full length upon the ground, wrapt in her robe.

TAL. Great Zeus! what can I say? that thine eye is over man? or that we hold this false opinion all to no purpose,

[1] *i.e.* the Peloponnesus.

[2] *i.e.* Delos, where Latona gave birth to Apollo.

[3] 'Αθαναίας, but Nauck's correction θεᾶς ναίουσ' is extremely likely.

[4] *i.e.* the embroidered robe presented to this goddess at the Panathenaea.

[5] θεράπναν, the Schol. explains the word by δούλην, and most copies give θεράπαιναν.

[6] *i.e.* forced to be the mistress of some deadly foe.

thinking there is any race of gods,[1] when it is chance that rules the mortal sphere? Was not this the queen of wealthy Phrygia, the wife of Priam highly blest? And now her city is utterly o'erthrown by the foe, and she,[2] a slave in her old age, her children dead, lies stretched upon the ground, soiling her hair, poor lady! in the dust. Well, well; old as I am, may death be my lot before I am involved in any foul mischance. Arise, poor queen! lift up thyself and raise that hoary head.

HEC. Ah! who art thou that wilt not let my body rest? why disturb me in my anguish, whosoe'er thou art?

TAL. 'Tis I, Talthybius, who am here, the minister of the Danai; Agamemnon has sent me for thee, lady.

HEC. Good friend, art come because the Achæans are resolved to slay me too at the grave? How welcome would thy tidings be! Let us hasten and lose no time; prithee, lead the way, old sir.

TAL. I am come to fetch thee to bury thy daughter's corpse, lady; and those that send me are the two sons of Atreus and the Achæan host.

HEC. Ah! what wilt thou say? Art thou not come, as I had thought, to fetch me to my doom, but to announce ill news? Lost, lost, my child! snatched from thy mother's arms! and I am childless now, at least as touches thee; ah, woe is me!

How did ye end her life? was any mercy shown? or did ye deal ruthlessly with her as though your victim were a foe, old man? Speak, though thy words must be pain to me.

TAL. Lady, thou art bent on making mine a double meed of tears in pity for thy child; for now too as I tell the sad tale a tear will wet my eye, as it did at the tomb when she was dying.

All Achæa's host was gathered there in full array before

[1] Nauck marks l. 490 as spurious. [2] *αὐτή*.

the tomb to see thy daughter offered; and the son of Achilles took Polyxena by the hand and set her on the top of the mound, while I stood near; and a chosen band of young Achæans followed to hold thy child and prevent her struggling. Then did Achilles' son take in his hands a brimming cup of gold and poured [1] an offering to his dead sire, making a sign to me to proclaim silence throughout the Achæan host. So I stood at his side and in their midst proclaimed, "Silence, ye Achæans! hushed be the people all! peace! be still!" Therewith I hushed the host. Then spake he, "Son of Peleus, father mine, accept the offering I pour thee to appease thy spirit, strong to raise the dead; and come to drink the black blood of a virgin pure, which I and the host are offering thee; oh! be propitious to us; grant that we may loose our prows and the cables of our ships, and, meeting with a prosperous voyage from Ilium, all to our country come." So he; and all the army echoed his prayer. Then seizing his golden sword by the hilt he drew it from its scabbard, signing the while to the picked young Argive warriors to hold the maid. But she, when she was ware thereof, uttered her voice and said; "O Argives, who have sacked my city! of my free will I die; let none lay hand on me; for bravely will I yield my neck. Leave me free, I do beseech; so slay me, that death may find me free; for to be called a slave amongst the dead fills my royal heart with shame." Thereat the people shouted their applause, and king Agamemnon bade the young men loose the maid. [So they set her free, as soon as they heard this last command from him whose might was over all.][2] And she, hearing her captors' words took her robe and tore it open from the shoulder to the waist, displaying a breast and bosom fair as a statue's; then sinking on her knee, one word she spake more piteous than all the rest, "Young

[1] ἔρρει χειρί, for which Dindorf gives ἐξέρραινε.

[2] These two lines are rejected by most editors as an interpolation.

prince, if 'tis my breast thou'dst strike, lo! here it is, strike home! or if at my neck thy sword thou'lt aim, behold! that neck is bared."

Then he, half glad, half sorry in his pity for the maid, cleft with the steel the channels of her breath, and streams of blood gushed forth; but she, e'en in death's agony, took good heed to fall with maiden grace, hiding from gaze of man what modest maiden must. Soon as she had breathed her last through the fatal gash, each Argive set his hand to different tasks, some strewing leaves o'er the corpse in handfuls, others bringing pine-logs and heaping up a pyre; and he, who brought nothing, would hear from him who did such taunts as these, "Stand'st thou still, ignoble wretch, with never a robe or ornament[1] to bring for the maiden? Wilt thou give naught to her that showed such peerless bravery and spirit?"

Such is the tale I tell about thy daughter's death, and I regard thee as blest beyond all mothers in thy noble child, yet crossed in fortune more than all.

CHO. Upon the race of Priam and my city some fearful curse hath burst; 'tis sent by God, and we must bear it.

HEC. O my daughter! 'mid this crowd of sorrows I know not where to turn my gaze; for if I set myself to one, another will not give me pause; while from this again a fresh grief summons me, finding a successor to sorrow's throne. No longer now can I efface from my mind the memory of thy sufferings sufficiently to stay my tears; yet hath the story of thy noble death taken from the keenness of my grief. Is it not then strange that poor land, when blessed by heaven with a lucky year, yields a good crop, while that which is good, if robbed of needful care, bears but little increase; yet 'mongst men[2] the knave is never other than a knave, the good man aught but good, never changing for the worse

[1] Nauck regards line 578 as spurious.

[2] *ἀνθρώποις*, so Paley with the MSS., but Hermann writes *ἄνθρωποι*.

because of misfortune, but ever the same? Is then the difference due to birth or bringing up? Good training doubtless gives lessons in good conduct, and if a man have mastered this, he knows what is base by the standard of good. Random shafts of my soul's shooting these, I know.

(*To* TALTHYBIUS.) Go thou and proclaim to the Argives that they touch not my daughter's body but keep the crowd away. For when a countless host is gathered, the mob knows no restraint, and the unruliness of sailors exceeds that of fire, all abstinence from crime being counted criminal. [*Exit* TALTHYBIUS.

(*Addressing a servant.*) My aged handmaid, take a pitcher and dip it in the salt sea and bring hither thereof, that I for the last time may wash my child, a virgin wife, a widowed maid,[1] and lay her out,—as she deserves, ah! whence can I? impossible! but as best I can; and what will that amount to? I will collect adornment from the captives, my companions in these tents, if haply any of them escaping her master's eye have some secret[2] store from her old home. O towering halls, O home so happy once, O Priam, rich in store of fairest wealth, most blest of sires, and I no less, the grey-haired mother of thy race, how are we brought to naught, stripped of our former pride! And spite of all we vaunt ourselves, one on the riches of his house, another because he has an honoured name amongst his fellow-citizens! But these things are naught; in vain are all our thoughtful schemes, in vain our vaunting words. He is happiest who meets no sorrow in his daily walk.

[*Exit* HECUBA.

CHO. Woe and tribulation were made my lot in life, soon as ever Paris felled his beams of pine in Ida's woods, to sail across the heaving main in quest of Helen's hand, fairest

[1] If this line is genuine, it may be an allusion to her betrothal to Achilles.

[2] *κλέμμα*; Nauck proposes *κτῆμα*.

bride on whom the sun-god turns his golden eye. For here beginneth trouble's cycle, and, worse than that, relentless fate; and from one man's folly came a universal curse, bringing death to the land of Simois, with trouble from an alien shore.[1] The strife the shepherd decided on Ida 'twixt three daughters of the blessed gods, brought as its result war and bloodshed and the ruin of my home; and many a Spartan maiden too is weeping bitter tears in her halls on the banks of fair Eurotas, and many a mother whose sons are slain, is smiting her hoary head and tearing her cheeks, making her nails red in the furrowed gash.

MAID. [*Entering excitedly, attended by bearers bringing in a covered corpse.*] Oh! where, ladies, is Hecuba, our queen of sorrow, who far surpasses all in tribulation, men and women both alike? None shall wrest the crown from her.

CHO. What now, thou wretched bird of boding note? Thy evil tidings never seem to rest.

MAID. 'Tis to Hecuba I bring my bitter news; no easy task is it for mortal lips to speak smooth words in sorrow's hour.

CHO. Lo! she is coming even now from the shelter of the tent, appearing just in time to hear thee speak.

MAID. Alas for thee! most hapless queen, ruined beyond all words of mine to tell; robbed of the light of life; of children, husband, city reft; hopelessly undone!

HEC. This is no news but insult; I have heard it all before. But why art thou come, bringing hither to me the corpse of Polyxena, on whose burial Achæa's host was reported to be busily engaged?

MAID. (*aside.*) She little knows what I have to tell, but mourns Polyxena, not grasping her new sorrows.

HEC. Ah! woe is me! thou art not surely bringing hither mad Cassandra, the prophetic maid?

MAID. She lives, of whom thou speakest; but the dead

[1] *συμφορά τ' ἀπ' ἄλλων.* Weil conjectures *συμφορά τε τλάμων.*

thou dost not weep is here. [*Uncovering the corpse.*] Mark well the body now laid bare; is not this a sight to fill thee with wonder, and upset thy hopes?

HEC. Ah me! 'tis the corpse of my son Polydore I behold, whom he of Thrace was keeping safe for me in his halls. Alas! this is the end of all; my life is o'er. O my son, my son, alas for thee! a frantic strain I now begin; thy fate I learnt, a moment gone, from some foul fiend.[1]

MAID. What! so thou knewest thy son's fate, poor lady.

HEC. I cannot, cannot credit this fresh sight I see. Woe succeeds to woe; time will never cease henceforth to bring me groans and tears.[2]

CHO. Alas! poor lady, our sufferings are cruel indeed.

HEC. O my son, child of a luckless mother, what was the manner of thy death? what lays thee dead at my feet? Who did the deed?

MAID. I know not. On the sea-shore I found him.

HEC. Cast up on the smooth sand, or thrown there after he murderous blow?

MAID. The waves had washed him ashore.

HEC. Alas! alas! I read aright the vision I saw in my sleep, nor did the phantom dusky-winged escape my ken, even the vision I saw concerning my son, who is now no more within the bright sunshine.

CHO. Who slew him then? Can thy dream-lore[3] tell us that?

HEC. 'Twas my own familiar friend, the knight of Thrace, with whom his aged sire had placed the boy in hiding.

CHO. O horror! what wilt thou say? did he slay him to get the gold?

HEC. O awful crime! O deed without a name! beggaring wonder! impious! intolerable! Where are now the

[1] *i.e.*, in a dream.

[2] ἀστένακτος, ἀδάκρυτος ἀμέρα ἐπισχήσει (Hermann).

[3] ὀνειρόφρων.

laws 'twixt guest and host? Accursed monster! how hast thou mangled his flesh, slashing the poor child's limbs with ruthless sword, lost to all sense of pity!

CHO. Alas for thee! how some deity, whose hand is heavy on thee, hath sent thee troubles beyond all other mortals! But yonder I see our lord and master Agamemnon coming; so let us be still henceforth, my friends.

AGA. Hecuba, why art thou delaying to come and bury thy daughter? for it was for this that Talthybius brought me thy message begging that none of the Argives should touch thy child. And so I granted this, and none is touching her, but this long delay of thine fills me with wonder. Wherefore am I come to send thee hence; for our part there is well performed; if herein there be any place for "well."

Ha! what man is this I see near the tents, some Trojan's corpse? 'tis not an Argive's body; *that* the garments it is clad in tell me.

HEC. (*aside.*) Unhappy one! in naming thee I name myself; O Hecuba, what shall I do? throw myself here at Agamemnon's knees, or bear my sorrows in silence?

AGA. Why dost thou turn thy back towards me and weep, refusing to say what has happened, or who this is?

HEC. (*aside.*) But should he count me as a slave and foe and spurn me from his knees, I should but add to my anguish.

AGA. I am no prophet born; wherefore, if I be not told, I cannot learn the current of thy thoughts.

HEC. (*aside.*) Can it be that in estimating this man's feelings I make him out too ill-disposed, when he is not really so?

AGA. If thy wish really is that I should remain in ignorance, we are of one mind; for I have no wish myself to listen.

HEC. (*aside.*) Without his aid I shall not be able to

avenge my children. Why[1] do I still ponder the matter? I must do and dare whether I win or lose. (*Turning to* AGAMEMNON.) O Agamemnon! by thy knees, by thy beard and conquering hand I implore thee.

AGA. What is thy desire? to be set free? that is easily done.

HEC. Not that; give me vengeance on the wicked, and evermore am I willing to lead a life of slavery.

AGA. Well, but why dost thou call me to thy aid?[2]

HEC. 'Tis a matter thou little reckest of, O king. Dost see this corpse, for whom my tears now flow?

AGA. I do; but what is to follow, I cannot guess.

HEC. He was my child in days gone by; I bore him in my womb.

AGA. Which of thy sons is he, poor sufferer?

HEC. Not one of Priam's race who fell 'neath Ilium's walls.

AGA. Hadst thou any son besides those, lady?

HEC. Yes, him thou seest here, of whom, methinks, I have small gain.

AGA. Where then was he, when his city was being destroyed?

HEC. His father, fearful of his death, conveyed him out of Troy.

AGA. Where did he place him apart from all the sons he then had?

HEC. Here in this very land, where his corpse was found.

AGA. With Polymestor, the king of this country?

HEC. Hither was he sent in charge of gold, most bitter trust!

AGA. By whom was he slain? what death o'ertook him?

[1] *τί*; Nauck *ποῖ*.

[2] Hirzel conjectures with much probability that a line has been lost here. Paley supplies the necessary connection thus, "well, suppose I consent, say how I am to help thee."

HEC. By whom but by this man? His Thracian host slew him.

AGA. The wretch! could he have been so eager for the treasure?

HEC. Even so; soon as ever he heard of the Phrygians' disaster.

AGA. Where didst find him? or did some one bring his corpse?

HEC. This maid, who chanced upon it on the sea-shore.

AGA. Was she seeking it, or bent on other tasks?

HEC. She had gone to fetch water from the sea to wash Polyxena.

AGA. It seems then his host slew him and cast his body out to sea.

HEC. Aye, for the waves to toss, after mangling him thus.

AGA. Woe is thee for thy measureless troubles!

HEC. I am ruined; no evil now is left, O Agamemnon.

AGA. Look you! what woman was ever born to such misfortune?

HEC. There is none, unless thou wouldst name misfortune herself. But hear my reason for throwing myself at thy knees. If my treatment seems to thee deserved, I will be content; but, if otherwise, help me to punish this most godless host, that hath wrought a deed most damned, fearless alike of gods in heaven or hell; [who, though full oft he had shared my board and been counted first of all my guest-friends and after meeting with every kindness he could claim and receiving my consideration, slew my son, and bent though he was on murder,[1] deigned not to bury him but cast his body forth to sea].[2]

[1] The meaning apparently is "he grudged him burial which at any rate he might have granted, if he wished to kill him." But the passage is probably spurious, and it is difficult to extract any satisfactory sense from it.

[2] Lines 793-797 are thus inclosed in Nauck's text, partly on his own

I may be a slave and weak as well, but the gods are strong, and custom too which prevails o'er them, for by custom it is that we believe in them and set up bounds of right and wrong for our lives.[1] Now if this principle, when referred to thee, is to be set at naught, and they are to escape punishment who murder guests or dare to plunder the temples of gods, then is all fairness in things human at an end. Deem this then a disgrace and show regard for me, have pity on me, and, like an artist standing back from his picture, look on me and closely scan my piteous state. I was once a queen, but now I am thy slave; a happy mother once, but now childless and old alike, reft of city, utterly forlorn, the most wretched woman living. Ah! woe is me! whither wouldst thou withdraw thy steps from me? [*As* AGAMEMNON *is turning away.*] My efforts then will be in vain, ah me! ah me! Why, oh! why do we mortals toil, as needs we must, and seek out all other sciences, but persuasion, the only real mistress of mankind, we take no further pains to master completely by offering to pay for the knowledge, so that any[2] man might upon occasion convince his fellows as he pleased and gain his point as well? How shall anyone hereafter hope for prosperity? All those[3] my sons are gone from me, and I, their mother, am led away into captivity to suffer shame, while yonder I see the smoke leaping up o'er my city. Further,—though perhaps this were idly urged, to plead thy love, still will I put the case:—at thy side lies my daughter, Cassandra, the maid

authority, partly on that of Matthiae and Dindorf. Paley only rejects 794 and 795, but scarcely defends the rest.

[1] Paley explains this as meaning that the ordinary run of men adopt religious opinions and act on certain principles of justice and injustice, more from its being the established custom than from any real conviction. Nauck regards 800-801 as interpolated.

[2] *ἵν' ἦν*, so Elmsley for *ἵν' ᾖ*.

[3] *οἱ μὲν τοσοῦτοι*; Weil *οἱ μέν ποτ' ὄντες*.

inspired, as the Phrygians call her. How then, O king, wilt thou acknowledge those nights of rapture, or what return shall she my daughter or I her mother have for all the love she has lavished on her lord? [For from darkness and the endearments of the night mortals reap by far their keenest joys.][1] Heaken then; dost see this corpse? By doing him a service thou wilt do it to a kinsman of thy bride's. One thing only have I yet to urge. Oh! would I had a voice in arms, in hands, in hair and feet, placed there by the arts of Dædalus or some god, that all together they might with tears embrace thy knees, bringing a thousand pleas to bear on thee! O my lord and master, most glorious light of Hellas, listen, stretch forth a helping hand to this aged woman, for all she is a thing of naught; still do so.[2] For 'tis ever a good man's duty to succour the right, and to punish evil-doers wherever found.

CHO. 'Tis strange how each extreme doth meet in human life! Custom determines even our natural ties, making the most bitter foes friends, and regarding as foes those who formerly were friends.

AGA. Hecuba, I feel compassion for thee and thy son and thy ill-fortune, as well as for thy suppliant gesture, and I would gladly see yon impious host pay thee this forfeit for the sake of heaven and justice, could I but find some way to help thee without appearing to the army to have plotted the death of the Thracian king for Cassandra's sake. For on one point I am assailed by perplexity; the army count this man their friend, the dead their foe; that he is dear to thee is a matter apart, wherein the army has no share. Reflect on this; for though thou find'st me ready to share thy toil and quick to lend my aid, yet the risk of being reproached by the Achæans makes me hesitate.

[1] Matthiae, whom most editors have followed, condemns these two lines as spurious.

[2] Line 843 is perhaps interpolated.

HEC. Ah! there is not in the world a single man free; for he is either a slave to money or to fortune, or else the people in their thousands or the fear of public prosecution[1] prevents him from following the dictates of his heart.

But since thou art afraid, deferring too much to the rabble, I will rid thee of that fear. Thus; be privy to my plot if I devise mischief against this murderer, but refrain from any share in it. And if there break out among the Achæans any uproar or attempt at rescue, when the Thracian is suffering his doom, check it, though without seeming to do so on my account. For what remains, take heart; I will arrange everything well.

AGA. How? what wilt thou do? wilt take a sword in thy old hand and slay the barbarian, or hast thou drugs or what to help thee? Who will take thy part? whence wilt thou procure friends?

HEC. Sheltered beneath these tents is a host of Trojan women.

AGA. Dost mean the captives, the booty of the Hellenes?

HEC. With their help will I punish my murderous foe.

AGA. How are women to master men?

HEC. Numbers are a fearful thing, and joined to craft a desperate foe.

AGA. True; still I have a mean opinion of the female race.

HEC. What? did not women slay the sons of Ægyptus, and utterly clear Lemnos of men? But let it be even thus; put an end to our conference, and send this woman for me safely through the host. And do thou (*To a servant,*) draw near my Thracian friend and say, "Hecuba, once queen of Ilium, summons thee, on thy own business no less than hers, thy children too, for they also must hear what she has

[1] An allusion perhaps to the γραφὴ παρανόμων at Athens, *i.e.*, prosecution for proposing unconstitutional measures; though the expression may merely mean the written laws, as opposed to the ἄγραφοι νόμοι.

to say." Defer awhile, Agamemnon, the burial of Polyxena lately slain, that brother and sister may be laid on the same pyre and buried side by side, a double cause of sorrow to their mother.

AGA. So shall it be; yet had the host been able to sail, I could not have granted thee this boon; but, as it is, since the god sends forth no favouring breeze, we needs must abide, seeing, as we do, that sailing is at a standstill.[1] Good luck to thee! for this is the interest alike of individual and state, that the wrong-doer be punished and the good man prosper. [*Exit* AGAMEMNON.

CHO. No more, my native Ilium, shalt thou be counted among the towns ne'er sacked; so thick a cloud of Hellene troops is settling all around, wasting thee with the spear; shorn art thou of thy coronal of towers, and fouled most piteously with filthy soot; no more, ah me! shall I tread thy streets.

'Twas in the middle of the night my ruin came, in the hour when sleep steals sweetly o'er the eyes after the feast is done. My husband, the music o'er, and the sacrifice that sets the dance afoot now ended,[2] was lying in our bridal-chamber, his spear hung on a peg; with never a thought of the sailor-throng encamped upon the Trojan shores; and I was braiding up my tresses 'neath a tight-drawn snood before my golden mirror's countless rays, that I might lay me down to rest; when lo! through the city rose a din, and a cry went ringing down the streets of Troy, "Ye sons of Hellas, when, oh! when will ye sack the citadel of Ilium, and seek your homes?" Up sprang I from my bed, with only a mantle about me, like a Dorian maid, and sought in vain, ah me! to station myself at the holy hearth of Artemis; for,

[1] πλοῦν ὀρῶντας ἡσυχον; but Elmsley conjectures ὀρῶντά μ', *i.e.* "I must stay here, idly waiting for a chance of sailing." Hartung ἡσύχους.

[2] μολπᾶν δ' ἄπο καὶ χοροποιῶν θυσιᾶν (Paley). Nauck χαροποιὸν θυσίαν, an easier but doubtful reading.

after seeing my husband slain, I was hurried away o'er the broad sea; with many a backward look at my city, when the ship began her homeward voyage and parted me from Ilium's strand; till alas! for very grief I fainted, cursing Helen the sister of the Dioscuri, and Paris the baleful shepherd of Ida; for 'twas their marriage, which was no marriage but a curse by some demon sent, that robbed me of my country and drove me from my home. Oh! may the sea's salt flood ne'er carry her home again; and may she never set foot in her father's halls!

POL. My dear friend Priam, and thou no less,[1] Hecuba, I weep to see thee and thy city thus, and thy daughter lately slain. Alas! there is naught to be relied on; fair fame is insecure, nor is there any guarantee that weal will not be turned to woe. For the gods confound our fortunes, tossing them to and fro, and introduce confusion, that our perplexity may make us worship them. But what boots it to bemoan these things, when it brings one no nearer to heading the trouble? If thou art blaming me at all for my absence, stay a moment; I was away in the very heart of Thrace when thou wast brought hither; but on my return, just as I was starting from my home for the same purpose, thy maid fell in with me, and gave me thy message, which brought me here at once.

HEC. Polymestor, I am holden in such wretched plight that I blush to meet thine eye; for my present evil case makes me ashamed to face thee who didst see me in happier days, and I cannot[2] look on thee with unfaltering gaze. Do not then think it ill-will on my part, Polymestor; there is another cause as well, I mean the custom which forbids women to meet men's gaze.

POL. No wonder, surely. But what need hast thou of me? Why didst send for me to come hither from my house?

[1] Line 953 is probably spurious.

[2] Nauck regards as spurious the words *τυγχάνουσ' . . . δυναίμην*.

HEC. I wish to tell thee and thy children a private matter of my own; prithee, bid thy attendants withdraw from the tent.

POL. (*To his Attendants.*) Retire; this desert spot is safe enough. (*To* HECUBA.) Thou art my friend, and this Achæan host is well-disposed to me. But thou must tell me how prosperity is to succour its unlucky friends; for ready am I to do so.

HEC. First tell me of the child Polydore, whom thou art keeping in thy halls, received from me and his father; is he yet alive? The rest will I ask thee after that.

POL. Yes, thou still hast a share in fortune there.

HEC. Well said, dear friend! how worthy of thee!

POL. What next wouldst learn of me?

HEC. Hath he any recollection of me his mother?

POL. Aye, he was longing to steal away hither to thee.

HEC. Is the gold safe, which he brought with him from Troy?

POL. Safe under lock and key in my halls.

HEC. There keep it, but covet not thy neighbour's goods.

POL. Not I; God grant me luck of what I have, lady!

HEC. Dost know what I wish to say to thee and thy children?

POL. Not yet; thy words maybe will declare it.

HEC. May it grow as dear to thee as thou now art to me![1]

POL. What is it that I and my children are to learn?

HEC. There be ancient vaults filled full of gold by Priam's line.

POL. Is it this thou wouldst tell thy son?

HEC. Yes, by thy lips, for thou art a righteous man.

POL. What need then of these children's presence?

[1] *ἔστω φιλητέις*, making *χρυσὸς* the subject, the words being strongly ironical. Hermann, Dindorf and Nauck read *ἔστ' ὦ φιλητέις*, κ.τ.λ., and regard the sentence as completed in 1002, as if *εἰσι* had preceded.

CHO. Heard ye, friends, that Thracian's cry of woe?

POL. (*within.*) O horror! horror! my children! O the cruel blow.

CHO. Friends, there is strange mischief afoot in yon tent.

POL. (*within.*) Nay, ye shall never escape for all your hurried flight; for with my fist will I burst open the inmost recesses of this building.

CHO. Hark! how he launches ponderous blows![1] Shall we force an entry? The crisis calls on us to aid Hecuba and the Trojan women.

HEC. Strike on, spare not, burst the doors! thou shalt ne'er replace bright vision in thy eyes nor ever see thy children, whom I have slain, alive again.

CHO. What! hast thou foiled the Thracian, and is the stranger in thy power, mistress mine? is all thy threat now brought to pass?

HEC. A moment, and thou shalt see him before the tent, his eyes put out, with random step advancing as a blind man must; yea, and the bodies of his two children whom I with my brave daughters of Troy did slay; he hath paid me his forfeit; look where he cometh from the tent. I will withdraw out of his path and stand aloof from the hot fury[2] of this Thracian, my deadly foe.

POL. Woe is me! whither can I go, where halt, or whither turn? shall I crawl upon my hands like a wild four-footed beast on their track? Which path shall I take first, this or that, eager as I am to clutch those Trojan murderesses that have destroyed me? Out upon ye, cursed daughters of Phrygia! to what corner have ye fled cowering before me? O sun-god, would thou couldst heal my bleeding orbs, ridding me of my blindness!

Ha! hush! I catch their stealthy footsteps here. Where can I dart on them and gorge me on their flesh and bones,

[1] Hermann would assign this verse to Polymestor.

[2] θυμῷ ζέοντι, Porson.

HEC. 'Tis better they should know it, in case of thy death.

POL. True; 'tis also the wiser way.

HEC. Well, dost thou know where stands the shrine of Trojan Athena?

POL. Is the gold there? what is there to mark it?

HEC. A black rock rising above the ground.

POL. Is there aught else thou wouldst tell me about the place?

HEC. I wish to keep safe the treasure I brought from Troy.

POL. Where can it be? inside thy dress, or hast thou it hidden?

HEC. 'Tis safe amid a heap of spoils within these tents.

POL. Where? This is the station built by the Achæans to surround their fleet.

HEC. The captive women have huts of their own.

POL. Is it safe to enter? are there no men about?

HEC. There are no Achæans within; we are alone. Enter then the tent, for the Argives are eager to set sail from Troy for home; and, when thou hast accomplished all that is appointed thee, thou shalt return with thy children to that bourn where thou hast lodged my son.

[*Exit* HECUBA *with* POLYMESTOR *and his children.*

CHO. Not yet hast thou paid the penalty, but maybe thou yet wilt; like one who slips and falls into the surge with no haven near, so shalt thou lose[1] thy own life for the life thou hast taken. For where liability to justice coincides with heaven's law, there is ruin fraught with death and doom. Thy hopes of this journey shall cheat thee, for it hath led thee, unhappy wretch! to the halls of death; and to no warrior's hand shalt thou resign thy life.

POL. (*within the tent.*) O horror! I am blinded of the light of my eyes, ah me!

[1] Reading ἐκπεσεῖ with Dindorf and Nauck.

making for myself a wild beasts' meal, exacting vengeance in requital of their outrage on me? Ah, woe is me! whither am I rushing, leaving my babes unguarded for hell-hounds to mangle, to be murdered and ruthlessly cast forth upon the hills, a feast of blood for dogs?[1] Where shall I stay or turn my steps? where rest? like a ship that lies anchored at sea, so gathering close[2] my linen robe I rush to that chamber of death, to guard my babes.

CHO. Woe is thee! what grievous outrage hath been wreaked on thee! a fearful penalty for thy foul deed [hath the deity imposed, whoe'er he is whose hand is heavy upon thee].[3]

POL. Woe is me! Ho! my Thracian spearmen, clad in mail, a race of knights whom Ares doth inspire! Ho! Achæans! sons of Atreus ho! to you I loudly call; come hither, in God's name come! Doth any hearken, or will no man help me? Why do ye delay? Women, captive women have destroyed me. A fearful fate is mine; ah me! my hideous outrage! Whither can I turn or go? Shall I take wings and soar aloft to the mansions of the sky, where Orion and Sirius dart from their eyes a flash as of fire, or shall I, in my misery, plunge to Hades' murky flood?

CHO. 'Tis a venial sin, when a man, suffering from evils too heavy to bear, rids himself of a wretched existence.

AGA. Hearing a cry I am come hither; for Echo, child of the mountain-rock, hath sent her voice loud-ringing through the host, causing a tumult. Had I not known that Troy's towers were levelled by the might of Hellas, this uproar had caused no slight panic.

POL. Best of friends! for by thy voice I know thee, Agamemnon, dost see my piteous state?

[1] *σφακτὰν κυσί τε φοινίαν δαῖτ' ἀνήμερόν τ' οὐρείαν ἐκβολάν*; so Paley, but there is no certainty about the reading.

[2] *i.e.* as the ship furls its canvas when coming to anchor.

[3] Omitted by Hermann as a repetition from l. 722.

AGA. What! hapless Polymestor, who hath stricken thee? who hath reft thine eyes of sight, staining the pupils with blood? who hath slain these children? whoe'er he was, fierce must have been his wrath against thee and thy children.

POL. Hecuba, helped by the captive women, hath destroyed me; no! not destroyed, far worse than that.

AGA. [*Addressing* HECUBA.] What hast thou to say? Was it thou that didst this deed, as he avers? thou, Hecuba, that hast ventured on this inconceivable daring?

POL. Ha! what is that? is she somewhere near? show me, tell me where, that I may grip her in my hands and rend her limb from limb, bespattering her with gore.

AGA. Ho! madman, what wouldst thou?

POL. By heaven I entreat thee, let me vent on her the fury of my arm.

AGA. Hold! banish that savage spirit from thy heart and plead thy cause, that after hearing thee and her in turn I may fairly decide what reason there is for thy present sufferings.

POL. I will tell my tale. There was a son of Priam, Polydore, the youngest, a child by Hecuba, whom his father Priam sent to me from Troy to bring up in my halls, suspecting no doubt the fall of Troy. Him I slew; but hear my reason for so doing, to show how cleverly and wisely I had thought it out.[1] My fear was that if that child were left to be thy enemy, he would re-people Troy and settle it afresh; and the Achæans, knowing that a son of Priam survived, might bring another expedition against the Phrygian land and harry and lay waste these plains of Thrace hereafter, for the neighbours of Troy to experience the very troubles we were lately suffering, O king. Now Hecuba, having discovered the death of her son, brought me hither

[1] Nauck rejects line 1137 and places an interrogation after 1136.

on the following pretext, saying she would tell me of hidden treasure stored up in Ilium by the race of Priam; and she led me apart with my children into the tent, that none but I might hear her news. So I sat me down on a couch in their midst to rest; for there were many of the Trojan maidens seated there,[1] some on my right hand, some on my left, as it had been beside a friend; and they were praising the weaving of our Thracian handiwork, looking at this robe as they held it up to the light; meantime others examined my Thracian spear and so stripped me of the protection of both. And those that were young mothers were dandling my children in their arms, with loud admiration, as they passed them on from hand to hand to remove them far from their father; and then after their smooth speeches, (wouldst thou believe it?) in an instant snatching daggers from some secret place in their dress they stab my children; whilst others, like foes, seized me hand and foot; and if I tried to raise my head, anxious to help my babes, they would clutch me by the hair; while if I stirred my hands, I could do nothing, poor wretch! for the numbers of the women. At last they wrought a fearful deed, worse than what had gone before; for they took their brooches and stabbed the pupils of my hapless eyes, making them gush with blood, and then fled through the chambers; up I sprang like a wild beast in pursuit of the shameless murderesses, searching along each wall with hunter's care, dealing buffets, spreading ruin. This then is what I have suffered because of my zeal for thee, O Agamemnon, for slaying an enemy of thine. But to spare thee a lengthy speech; if any of the men of former times have spoken ill of women, if any doth so now, or shall do so hereafter, all this in one short sentence will I say; for neither land or sea produces a race so pestilent, as whosoever hath had to do with them knows full well.

[1] *θάκους ἔχουσαι . . . ἧνουν* (Hermann).

CHO. Curb thy bold tongue, and do not, because of thy own woes, thus embrace the whole race of women in one reproach; [for though some of us, and those a numerous class, deserve to be disliked, there are others amongst us who rank naturally amongst the good].[1]

HEC. Never ought words to have outweighed deeds in this world, Agamemnon. No! if a man's deeds had been good, so should his words have been; if, on the other hand, evil, his words should have betrayed their unsoundness, instead of its being possible at times to give a fair complexion to injustice. There are, 'tis true, clever persons, who have made a science of this, but their cleverness cannot last for ever; a miserable end awaits them; none ever yet escaped. This is a warning I give thee at the outset. Now will I turn to this fellow, and will give thee thy answer, thou who sayest[2] it was to save Achæa double toil and for Agamemnon's sake that thou didst slay my son. Nay, villain, in the first place how could the barbarian race ever be friends with Hellas? Impossible, ever. Again, what interest hadst thou to further by thy zeal? was it to form some marriage, or on the score of kin, or, prithee, why? or was it likely that they would sail hither again and destroy thy country's crops? Whom dost thou expect to persuade into believing that? Wouldst thou but speak the truth, it was the gold that slew my son, and thy greedy spirit. Now tell me this; why, when Troy was victorious, when her ramparts still stood round her, when Priam was alive, and Hector's warring prospered, why didst thou not, if thou wert really minded to do Agamemnon a service, then slay the child, for thou hadst him in thy palace 'neath thy care, or bring him with thee alive to the Argives? Instead of this, when our sun was set

[1] Dindorf rejects these two lines as spurious. To extract any meaning at all it seems necessary to follow Paley's suggestion and read *μὴ κακῶν* for *τῶν κακῶν*. Hermann's *ἀντάριθμοι τῶν* scarcely commends itself.

[2] *ὃς φὴς*, MSS., *ὃς φήσ'*, Nauck.

and the smoke of our city showed it was in the enemy's power, thou didst murder the guest who had come to thy hearth. Furthermore, to prove thy villainy, hear this; if thou wert really a friend to those Achæans, thou shouldst have brought the gold, which thou sayst thou art keeping not for thyself but for Agamemnon, and given it to them, for they were in need and had endured a long exile from their native land. Whereas not even now canst thou bring thyself to part with it, but persistest in keeping it in thy palace. Again, hadst thou kept my son safe and sound, as thy duty was, a fair renown would have been thy reward, for it is in trouble's hour that the good most clearly show their friendship; though prosperity of itself in every case finds friends. Wert thou in need of money and he prosperous, that son of mine would have been as a mighty treasure for thee to draw upon; but now thou hast him no longer to be thy friend, and the benefit of the gold is gone from thee, thy children too are dead, and thyself art in this sorry plight.

To thee, Agamemnon, I say, if thou help this man, thou wilt show thy worthlessness; for thou wilt be serving one devoid of honour or piety, a stranger to the claims of good faith, a wicked host; while I shall say thou delightest in evil-doers, being such an one thyself; but I am not abusing my masters.

CHO. Look you! how a good cause ever affords men an opening for a good speech.

AGA. To be judge in a stranger's troubles goes much against my grain, but still I must; yea, for to take this matter in hand and then put it from me is a shameful course. My opinion, that thou mayst know it, is that it was not for the sake of the Achæans or me that thou didst slay thy guest, but to keep that gold in thy own house. In thy trouble thou makest a case in thy own interests. Maybe amongst you 'tis a light thing to murder guests, but with us in Hellas 'tis a disgrace. How can I escape reproach if I judge thee

not guilty? I cannot do it. Nay, since thou didst dare thy horrid crime, endure as well its painful consequence.

POL. Woe is me! worsted by a woman and a slave, I am, it seems, to suffer by unworthy hands.

HEC. Is it not just for thy atrocious crime?

POL. Ah, my children! ah, my blinded eyes! woe is me!

HEC. Dost thou grieve? what of me? thinkst thou I grieve not for my son?

POL. Thou wicked wretch! thy delight is in mocking me.

HEC. I am avenged on thee; have I not cause for joy?

POL. The joy will soon cease, in the day when ocean's flood—

HEC. Shall convey me to the shores of Hellas?

POL. Nay, but close o'er thee when thou fallest from the masthead.

HEC. Who will force me to take the leap?

POL. Of thy own accord wilt thou climb the ship's mast.

HEC. With wings upon my back, or by what means?

POL. Thou wilt become a dog with bloodshot eyes.

HEC. How knowest thou of my transformation?

POL. Dionysus, our Thracian prophet, told me so.

HEC. And did he tell thee nothing of thy present trouble?

POL. No; else hadst thou never caught me thus by guile.

HEC. Shall I die or live, and so complete my life on earth?

POL. Die shalt thou; and to thy tomb shall be given a name—

HEC. Recalling my form, or what wilt thou tell me?

POL. "The hapless hound's grave,"[1] a mark for mariners.

HEC. 'Tis naught to me, now that thou hast paid me forfeit.

POL. Further, thy daughter Cassandra must die.

[1] *i.e.* Cynossema, a promontory in the Thracian Chersonese.

HEC. I scorn the prophecy! I give it to thee to keep for thyself.

POL. Her shall the wife of Agamemnon, grim keeper of his palace, slay.

HEC. Never may the daughter of Tyndareus do such a frantic deed!

POL. And she shall slay this king as well,[1] lifting high the axe.

AGA. Ha! sirrah, art thou mad? art so eager to find sorrow?

POL. Kill me, for in Argos there awaits thee a murderous bath.

AGA. Ho! servants, hale him from my sight!

POL. Ha! my words gall thee?

AGA. Stop his mouth!

POL. Close it now; for I have spoken.

AGA. Haste and cast him upon some desert island, since his mouth is full of such exceeding presumption. Go thou, unhappy Hecuba, and bury thy two corpses; and you, Trojan women, to your masters' tents repair, for lo! I perceive a breeze just rising to waft us home. God grant we reach our country and find all well at home, released from troubles here!

CHO. Away to the harbour and the tents, my friends, to prove the toils of slavery! for such is fate's relentless hest.

[1] *καὐτόν γε τοῦτον.*

HERACLES MAD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AMPHITRYON.
MEGARA.
LYCUS.
IRIS.
MADNESS.
MESSENGER.
HERACLES.
THESEUS.
CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF THEBES.

SCENE.—At the entrance of Heracles' house in Thebes, before the altar of Zeus.

HERACLES MAD.

AMP. What mortal hath not heard of him who shared a wife with Zeus, Amphitryon of Argos, whom on a day Alcæus, son of Perseus, begat, Amphitryon the father of Heracles? He it was dwelt here in Thebes, where from the sowing of the dragon's teeth grew up a crop of earth-born giants; for of these Ares saved a scanty band, and their children's children people the city of Cadmus. Hence sprung Creon, son of Menœceus, king of this land; and Creon became the father of this lady Megara, whom once all Cadmus' race escorted with the glad music of lutes at her wedding, in the day that Heracles, illustrious chief, led her to my halls. Now he, my son, left Thebes where I was settled, left his wife Megara and her kin, eager to make his home in Argolis, in that walled town[1] which the Cyclopes built, whence I am exiled for the slaying of Electryon; so he, wishing to lighten[2] my affliction and to find a home in his own land, did offer Eurystheus a mighty price for my recall, even to free the world of savage monsters, whether it was that Hera goaded him to submit to this or that fate was leagued against him. Divers are the toils he hath accomplished, and last of all hath he passed through the mouth of Tænarus into the halls of Hades to drag to the light that hound with bodies three, and thence is he never returned. Now there is an ancient legend amongst the race of Cadmus,

[1] *i.e.* Mycenæ.

[2] Reading ἐξευμαρίζειν as Nauck proposed.

that one Lycus in days gone by was husband to Dirce, being king of this city with its seven towers, before that Amphion and Zethus, sons of Zeus, lords of the milk-white steeds, became rulers in the land. His son, called by the same name as his father, albeit no Theban but a stranger from Eubœa, slew Creon, and after that seized the government, having fallen on this city when weakened by dissension. So this connection with Creon is likely to prove to us a serious evil; for now that my son is in the bowels of the earth, this illustrious monarch Lycus is bent on extirpating the children of Heracles, to quench one bloody feud with another, likewise his wife and me, if useless age like mine is to rank amongst men, that the boys may never grow up to exact a blood-penalty of their uncle's family. So I, left here by my son, whilst he is gone into the pitchy darkness of the earth, to tend and guard his children in his house, am taking my place with their mother, that the race of Heracles may not perish,[1] here at the altar of Zeus the Saviour, which my own gallant child set up to commemorate his glorious victory over the Minyæ. And here we are careful to keep our station, though in need of everything, of food, of drink, and raiment, huddled together on the hard bare ground; for we are barred out from our house and sit here for want of any other safety. As for friends, some I see are insincere; while others, who are staunch, have no power to help us further. This is what misfortune means to man; God grant it may never fall to the lot of any who bears the least goodwill to me, to apply this never-failing test of friendship!

MEG. Old warrior, who erst did raze the citadel of the Taphians leading on the troops of Thebes to glory, how uncertain are God's dealings with man! I for instance, as far as concerned my sire[2] was never an outcast of fortune, for he was once accounted a man of might by reason of his

[1] Line 47 is regarded as spurious by Nauck.

[2] Creon.

wealth, possessed as he was of royal power, for which long spears are launched at the lives of the fortunate through love of it; children too he had; and me did he betroth to thy son, matching me in glorious marriage with Heracles. Whereas now all that is dead and gone from us; and I and thou, old friend, art doomed to die, and these children of Heracles, whom I am guarding 'neath my wing as a bird keepeth her tender chicks under her. And they the while in turn keep asking me, "Mother, whither is our father gone from the land? what is he about? when will he return?" Thus they inquire for their father, in childish perplexity; while I put them off with excuses, inventing stories; but still I wonder if 'tis he whenever a door creaks on its hinges, and up they all start, thinking to embrace their father's knees. What hope or way of salvation art thou now devising, old friend? for to thee I look. We can never steal beyond the boundaries of the land unseen, for there is too strict a watch set on us at every outlet, nor have we any longer hopes of safety in our friends. Whatever thy scheme is, declare it, lest our death be made ready, while we are only prolonging the time, powerless to escape.

AMP. 'Tis by no means easy, my daughter, to give one's earnest advice on such matters offhand, without weary thought.

MEG. Dost need a further taste of grief, or cling so fast to life?

AMP. Yes, I love this life, and cling to its hopes.

MEG. So do I; but it boots not to expect the unexpected, old friend.

AMP. In these delays is left the only cure for our evils.

MEG. 'Tis the pain of that interval I feel so.

AMP. Daughter, there may yet be a happy escape from present troubles for me and thee; my son, thy husband, may yet arrive. So calm thyself, and wipe those tears from thy children's eyes, and sooth them with soft words, invent-

ing a tale to delude them, piteous though such fraud be. Yea, for men's misfortunes ofttimes flag, and the stormy wind doth not always blow so strong, nor are the prosperous ever so[1]; for all things change, making way for each other. The bravest man is he who relieth ever on his hopes, but despair is the mark of a coward.

CHO. To the sheltering[2] roof, to the old man's couch, leaning on my staff have I set forth, chanting a plaintive dirge like some bird grown grey, I that am but a voice and nothing more, a fancy bred of the visions of sleep by night, palsied with age, yet meaning kindly. All hail! ye orphaned babes! all hail, old friend! thou too, unhappy mother, wailing for thy husband in the halls of Hades! Faint[3] not too soon upon your way, nor let your limbs grow weary, even as a colt beneath the yoke grows weary as he mounts some stony hill, dragging the weight of a wheeled car.[4] Take hold of hand or robe, whoso feels his footsteps falter. Old friend, escort another like thyself, who erst amid his toiling peers in the days of our youth would take his place beside thee, no blot upon his country's glorious record.

See, how like their father's sternly flash these children's eyes! Misfortune, God wot, hath not failed his children,[5] nor yet hath his comeliness been denied them. O Hellas! if thou lose these, of what allies wilt thou rob thyself!

But hist! I see Lycus, the ruler of this land, drawing near the house.

LYC. One question, if I may, to this father of Heracles

[1] Line 103 is marked as spurious by Nauck.

[2] *ὑπώροφα*. But Dindorf and Nauck give *ὑψόροφα* after Musgrave.

[3] These and the following exhortations are addressed by members of the Chorus to each other, as they ascend the steps of the stage to reach the altar (Paley).

[4] Lines 121 and 122 seem hopelessly corrupt in the MSS. reading. Nauck's correction is here followed as the most intelligible of many offered; *λέπας ζυγοφόρος ἅρματος βάρος φέρων | τροχηλάτοιο πῶλος*.

[5] This line, though defended by Paley, is rejected by most editors.

and his wife; and certainly as your lord and master I have a right to put what questions I choose. How long do ye seek to prolong your lives? What hope, what succour do ye see to save you from death? Do you trust that these children's father, who lies dead in the halls of Hades, will return? How unworthily ye show your sorrow at having to die, thou [*to* AMPHITRYON.] after thy idle boasts, scattered broadcast through Hellas, that Zeus was partner in thy marriage-bed and there begat a new god;[1] and thou [*to* MEGARA.] after calling thyself the wife of so peerless a lord.

After all, what was the fine exploit thy husband achieved, if he *did* kill a water-snake in a marsh or that monster of Nemea? which he caught in a snare, for all he says he strangled it to death in his arms. Are these your weapons for the hard struggle? Is it for this then that Heracles' children should be spared? a man who has won a reputation for valour in his contests with beasts, in all else a weakling; who ne'er buckled shield to arm nor faced the spear, but with a bow, that coward's weapon, was ever ready to run away. Archery is no test of manly bravery; no! he *is* a man who keeps his post in the ranks and steadily faces the swift[2] wound the spear may plough. My policy, again, old man, shows no reckless cruelty, but caution; for I am well aware I slew Creon, the father of Megara, and am in possession of his throne. So I have no wish that these children should grow up and be left to take vengeance on me in requital for[3] what I have done.

AMP. As for Zeus, let Zeus defend his son's case; but as for me, Heracles, I am only anxious on thy behalf to prove by what I say this tyrant's ignorance; for I

[1] *τίκοι νέον θεόν*, the last word being Wakefield's conjecture to complete the verse. Pflugk reads *ἐκοινώνει λέχους*.

[2] Wakefield *βαθεῖαν* for *ταχεῖαν*.

[3] *δίκην*, so Paley; but Nauck incloses the word in brackets as suspicious, and also *μίρει* in line 171.

cannot allow thee to be ill spoken of. First then for that which should never have been said,—for to speak of thee Heracles as a coward is, methinks, outside the pale of speech,—of that must I clear thee with heaven to witness. I appeal then to the thunder of Zeus, and the chariot wherein he rode, when he pierced the giants, earth's brood, to the heart with his winged shafts, and with gods uplifted the glorious triumph-song; or go to Pholoe[1] and ask the insolent tribe of four-legged Centaurs, thou craven king, ask them who they would judge their bravest foe: will they not say my son, who according to thee is but a pretender? Wert thou to ask Eubœan[2] Dirphys, thy native place, it would nowise sing thy praise, for thou hast never done a single gallant deed to which thy country can witness. Next thou dost disparage that clever invention, an archer's weapon; come, listen to me and learn wisdom. A man who fights in line is a slave to his weapons, and if his fellow-comrades want for courage he is slain himself through the cowardice of his neighbours, or, if he break his spear, he has not wherewithal to defend his body from death, having only one means of defence; whereas all who are armed with the trusty bow, though they have but one weapon, yet is it the best; for a man, after discharging countless arrows, still has others wherewith to defend himself from death, and standing at a distance keeps off the enemy, wounding them for all their watchfulness with shafts invisible, and never exposing himself to the foe, but keeping under cover; and this is far the wisest course in battle, to harm the enemy, if they are not stationed out of shot,[3] and keep safe oneself. These arguments completely contradict[4] thine with regard to the matter at issue. Next,

[1] A mountain in Arcadia, where Heracles had fought the Centaurs.

[2] Abantes was an old name for Eubœans.

[3] So Paley. But Hermann and Pflugk thus, "not standing out of the post which good luck has assigned." Hartung *ὡρμισμένον*.

[4] Nauck proposes to read *ἐναντίοι*, and to reject line 205.

why art thou desirous of slaying these children? What have they done to thee? One piece of wisdom I credit thee with, thy coward terror of a brave man's descendants. Still it is hard on us, if for thy cowardice we must die; a fate that ought to have overtaken thee at our braver hands, if Zeus had been fairly disposed towards us. But, if thou art so anxious to make thyself supreme in the land, let us at least go into exile; abstain from all violence, else thou wilt suffer by it whenso the deity causes fortune's breeze to veer round.

Ah! thou land of Cadmus,—for to thee too will I turn, upbraiding thee with words of reproach,—is this your succour of Heracles and his children? the man who faced alone the Minyan host in battle and allowed Thebes to see the light with freemen's eyes. I cannot praise Hellas, nor will I ever keep silence, finding her so craven as regards my son; she should have come with fire and sword and warrior's arms to help these tender babes, to requite him for all his labours in purging land and sea. Such help, my children, neither Hellas nor the city of Thebes affords you; to me a feeble friend ye look, that am but empty sound and nothing more. For the vigour which once I had, is gone from me; my limbs are palsied with age, and my strength is decayed. Were I but young and still a man of my hands, I would have seized my spear and dabbled those flaxen locks of his with blood, so that the coward would now be flying from my prowess beyond the bounds of Atlas.

Cho. Have not the brave amongst mankind a fair opening for speech, albeit slow to begin?

Lyc. Say what thou wilt of me in thy exalted phrase, but I by deeds will make thee rue those words. [*Calling to his servants.*] Ho! bid wood-cutters go, some to Helicon, others to the glens of Parnassus, and cut me logs of oak, and when they are brought to the town, pile up a stack of wood all round the altar on either side thereof, and set fire

to it and burn them all alive, that they may learn that the dead no longer rules this land, but that for the present I am king. [*Angrily to the* CHORUS.] As for you, old men, since ye thwart my views, not for the children of Heracles alone shall ye lament, but likewise for every blow that strikes his house, and ye shall ne'er forget ye are slaves and I your prince.

CHO. Ye sons of Earth, whom Ares[1] on a day did sow, when from the dragon's ravening jaw he had torn the teeth, up with your staves, whereon ye lean your hands, and dash out this miscreant's brains! a fellow who, without even being a Theban, but a foreigner, lords it shamefully o'er the younger folk;[2] but *my* master shalt thou never be to thy joy, nor shalt thou reap the harvest of all my toil; begone with my curse upon thee! carry thy insolence back to the place whence it came. For never whilst I live, shalt thou slay these sons of Heracles; not so deep beneath the earth hath their father disappeared from his children's ken. Thou art in possession of this land which thou hast ruined, while he its benefactor has missed his just reward; and yet do I take too much upon myself because I help those I love after their death, when most they need a friend? Ah! right hand, how fain wouldst thou wield the spear, but thy weakness is a death-blow to thy fond desire; for then had I stopped thee calling me slave, and I would have governed Thebes, wherein thou art now exulting, with credit; for a city sick with dissension and evil counsels thinketh not aright; otherwise it would never have accepted thee as its master.

MEG. Old sirs, I thank you; 'tis right that friends should feel virtuous indignation on behalf of those they love; but do not on our account vent your anger on the

[1] It being Cadmus who sowed the teeth, Kirchhoff thinks that something may have been lost, or that we should read Ἄρεως σπείρει ποτὲ Κάδμος δράκοντος.

[2] *τῶν νέων.* Pierson ἐγγενῶν.

tyrant to your own undoing. Hear my advice, Amphitryon, if haply there appear to thee to be aught in what I say. I love my children; strange if I did not love those whom I laboured to bring forth! Death I count a dreadful fate; but the man, who wrestles with necessity, I esteem a fool. Since we must die, let us do so without being burnt alive, to furnish our foes with food for merriment, which to my mind is an evil worse than death; for many a fair guerdon do we owe our family.[1] Thine has ever been a warrior's fair fame, so 'tis not to be endured that thou shouldst die a coward's death; and my husband's reputation needs no one to witness that he would ne'er consent to save these children's lives by letting them incur the stain of cowardice; for the noble are afflicted by disgrace on account of their children, nor must I shrink from following my lord's example. As to thy hopes consider how I weigh them. Thou thinkest thy son will return from beneath the earth: who ever has come back from the dead out of the halls of Hades? Thou hast a hope perhaps of softening this man by entreaty: no, no! better to fly from one's enemy when he is so brutish, but yield to men of breeding and culture; for thou wilt more easily obtain mercy there by friendly overtures.[2] True, a thought has already occurred to me that we might by entreaty obtain a sentence of exile for the children; yet this too is misery, to compass their deliverance with dire penury as the result; for 'tis a saying that hosts look sweetly on banished friends[3] for a day and no more. Steel thy heart to die with us, for that awaits thee after all. By thy brave soul I challenge thee, old friend; for whoso struggles hard[4] to escape destiny shows zeal no doubt, but 'tis zeal with a

[1] Nauck regards this line as suspicious.
[2] Reading *ὑποβαλὼν . . . τύχοις*.
[3] Reading *φίλοις* with Matthiae.
[4] Paley retains the old reading *ἐκμοχθεῖ* in preference to Reiske's *ἐκμοχθεῖν*.

taint of folly; for what must be, no one will ever avail to alter.

CHO. If a man had insulted thee, while yet my arms were lusty, there would have been an easy way to stop him;[1] but now am I a thing of naught; and so thou henceforth, Amphitryon, must scheme how to avert misfortune.

AMP. 'Tis not cowardice or any longing for life that hinders my dying, but my wish to save my son's children, though no doubt I am vainly wishing for impossibilities. Lo! here is my neck ready for thy sword to pierce, my body for thee to hack or hurl from the rock; only one boon I crave for both of us, O king; slay me and this hapless mother before thou slay the children, that we may not see the hideous sight, as they gasp out their lives, calling on their mother and their father's sire; for the rest work thy will, if so thou art inclined; for we have no defence against death.

MEG. I too implore thee add a second boon, that by thy single act thou mayst put us both under a double obligation; suffer me to deck my children in the robes of death,—first opening the palace gates, for now are we shut out,—that this at least they may obtain from their father's halls.

LYC. I grant it, and bid my servants undo the bolts. Go in and deck yourselves; robes I grudge not. But soon as ye have clothed yourselves, I will return to you to consign you to the nether world. [*Exit* LYCUS.

MEG. Children, follow the footsteps of your hapless mother to your father's halls, where others possess his substance, though his name is still ours.

[*Exit* MEGARA *with her children.*

AMP. O Zeus, in vain, it seems, did I get thee to share my bride with me; in vain used we to call thee father of my son.[2] After all thou art less our friend than thou didst

[1] Nauck reads ἐπανσά γ' ἄν, Paley ἐπαύσαν' ἄν.

[2] There is some corruption here. Nauck's γονέ' ἐμοῦ σ' ἐκλῄζομεν is followed, but the true reading is quite uncertain.

pretend. Great god as thou art, I, a mere mortal, surpass thee in true worth. For I did not betray the children of Heracles; but thou by stealth didst find thy way to my couch, taking another's wife without leave given, while to save thy own friends thou hast no skill. Either thou art a god of little sense, or else naturally unjust. [*Exit* AMPHITRYON.

CHO. Phœbus is singing a plaintive dirge to drown his happier strains, striking with key of gold his sweet-tongued lyre; so too am I fain to sing a song of praise, a crown to all his toil, concerning him who is gone to the gloom beneath the nether world, whether I am to call him son of Zeus or of Amphitryon. For the praise of noble toils accomplished is a glory to the dead. First he cleared the grove of Zeus of a lion, and put its skin upon its back, hiding his auburn hair in its fearful gaping jaws; then on a day, with murderous bow he wounded the race of wild Centaurs, that range the hills, slaying them with winged shafts; Peneus, the river of fair eddies, knows him well, and those far fields unharvested, and the steadings on Pelion and they[1] who haunt the glens of Homole bordering thereupon, whence they rode forth to conquer Thessaly, arming themselves with pines for clubs; likewise he slew that dappled hind with horns of gold, that preyed upon the country-folk, glorifying Artemis,[2] huntress queen of Œnoe; next he mounted on a car and tamed with the bit the steeds of Diomede, that greedily champed their bloody food at gory mangers with jaws unbridled, devouring with hideous joy the flesh of men; then crossing[3] Hebrus' silver stream he still toiled on to perform the hests of the tyrant of Mycenæ, till he came to the strand of the Malian gulf by the streams of Anaurus,[4] where he slew with his arrows Cycnus, murderer

[1] *i.e.* the Centaurs.

[2] To whom he dedicated his spoil because the stag was sacred to her.

[3] Reading *περῶν δ' . . . ἐξέπρασσε μόχθον* (Dindorf).

[4] Reading *Ἀναύρου παρὰ πηγὰς Κύκνον ξεινοδαίκταν.*

of his guests, unsocial wretch who dwelt in Amphanæ; also he came to those minstrel maids, to their orchard in the west, to pluck from the leafy apple-tree its golden fruit, when he had slain the tawny dragon, whose awful coils were twined all round to guard it; and he made his way into ocean's lairs, bringing calm to men that use the oar;[1] moreover he sought the home of Atlas, and stretched out his hands to uphold the firmament, and on his manly shoulders took the starry mansions of the gods; then he went through the waves of heaving Euxine against the mounted host of Amazons dwelling round Mæotis, the lake that is fed by many a stream, having gathered to his standard all his friends from Hellas, to fetch[2] the gold-embroidered raiment of the warrior queen, a deadly quest for a girdle. And Hellas won those glorious spoils of the barbarian maid, and safe in Mycenæ are they now. On Lerna's murderous hound, the many-headed water-snake, he set his branding-iron, and smeared its venom on his darts, wherewith he slew the shepherd[3] of Erytheia, a monster with three bodies; and many another glorious achievement he brought to a happy issue; to Hades' house of tears hath he now sailed, the goal of his labours, where he is ending[4] his career of toil, nor cometh he thence again. Now is thy house left without a friend, and Charon's boat awaits thy children to bear them on that journey out of life, whence is no returning, contrary to God's law and man's justice; and it is to thy prowess that thy house is looking although thou art not here. Had I been strong and lusty, able to brandish the spear in battle's onset, my Theban compeers too, I would have stood

[1] *i.e.*, he cleared the sea of pirates.

[2] Paley thinks the original reading may have been *πέπλον χρυσεόστολον μέτα*; Nauck suggests *ποθῶν* for *πέπλων*. Either emendation gives the necessary sense.

[3] Geryon.

[4] *ἵν' ἐκπεραίνει*, Heath.

by thy children to champion them; but now my happy youth is gone and I am left.

But lo! I see the children[1] of Heracles who was erst so great, clad in the vesture of the grave, and his loving wife dragging her babes along at her side,[2] and that hero's aged sire. Ah! woe is me! no longer can I stem the flood of tears that spring to my old eyes.

MEG. Come now, who is to sacrifice or butcher these poor children? [or rob me of my wretched life?[3]] Behold! the victims are ready to be led to Hades' halls. O my children! an ill-matched company are we hurried off to die, old men and babes, and mothers, all together. Alas! for my sad fate and my children's, whom these eyes now for the last time behold. So I gave you birth and reared you only for our foes to mock, to flout, and slay. Ah me! how bitterly my hopes have disappointed[4] me in the expectation I once formed from the words of your father. [*Addressing each of her three sons in turn.*] To *thee* thy dead sire was for giving Argos; and thou wert to dwell in the halls of Eurystheus, lording it o'er the fair fruitful land of Argolis; and o'er thy head would he throw that lion's skin wherewith himself was girt. *Thou* wert to be king of Thebes, famed for its chariots, receiving as thy heritage my broad lands, for so thou[5] didst coax thy father dear; and to thy hand used he to resign the carved[6] club, his sure defence, pretending to give it thee. To *thee* he promised to give Œchalia, which once his archery had wasted. Thus with three principalities would your father exalt you his three sons, proud

[1] Nauck regards the words *δήποτε παῖδας* as spurious.

[2] *ὑποσειραίους*, Musgrave. For *ποσὶν*, which can only go with *ὑποσειραίους*, Wecklein reads *μόλις*.

[3] Regarded by Paley as an interpolation.

[4] *ἐξέπαισαν ἐλπίδες*. Hirzel *ἦ πολύ γε δόξης ἐξέπεσον εὐέλπιδος*.

[5] *ἐξέπειθες . . . σε* (Hermann).

[6] Reading *δαίδαλον*. Pflugk *Μαινάλου*.

of your manliness; while I was choosing the best brides for you, scheming to link [1] you by marriage to Athens, Thebes, and Sparta, that ye might live a happy life with a fast sheet-anchor to hold by. And now that is all vanished; fortune's breeze hath veered and given to you for brides the maidens of death in their stead, and tears to me to bathe [2] them in; woe is me for my foolish thoughts! and your grandsire here is celebrating your marriage-feast, accepting Hades as the father of your brides, a grim relationship to make. Ah me! which of you shall I first press to my bosom, which last? on which bestow my kiss, or clasp close to me? Oh! would that like the bee with russet wing, I could collect from every source my sighs in one, and, blending them together, shed them in one copious flood! Heracles, dear husband mine, to thee I call, if haply mortal voice can make itself heard in Hades' halls; thy father and children are dying, and I am doomed, I who once because of thee was counted blest as men count bliss. Come to our rescue; appear, I pray, if but as a phantom, since thy mere coming would be enough, for they are cowards compared with thee, who are slaying thy children.[3]

AMP. Lady, do thou prepare the funeral rites; but I, O Zeus, stretching out my hand to heaven, call on thee to help these children, if such be thy intention; for soon will any aid of thine be unavailing; and yet thou hast been oft invoked; my toil is wasted; death seems inevitable. Ye aged friends, the joys of life are few; so take heed that ye pass through it as gladly as ye may, without a thought of sorrow from morn till night; for time recks little of preserving our hopes; and, when he has busied himself on his own business,

[1] Reading *συνάπτουσ' . . . κάλῳς.*

[2] It seems to have been customary for the mother of the bridegroom to sprinkle water on the bride.

[3] Lines 495 and 496 present so much that is awkward, that many editors regard them as spurious. Kirchhoff reads *κακοὶ γάρ εἰσιν.*

away he flies. Look at me, a man who had made a mark amongst his fellows by deeds of note; yet hath fortune in a single day robbed me of it as of a feather that floats away toward the sky. I know not any whose plenteous wealth and high reputation is fixed and sure; fare ye well, for now have ye seen the last of your old friend, my comrades.

MEG. Ha! old friend, is it my own, my dearest I behold? or what am I to say?

AMP. I know not, my daughter; I too am struck dumb.

MEG. Is this he who, they told us, was beneath the earth?

AMP. 'Tis he, unless some day-dream mocks our sight.

MEG. What am I saying? What visions do these anxious eyes behold? Old man, this is none other than thy own son. Come hither, my children, cling to your father's robe, make haste to come, never loose your hold, for here is one to help you, nowise behind our saviour Zeus.

HER. All hail! my house, and portals of my home, how glad am I to emerge to the light and see thee. Ha! what is this? I see my children before the house in the garb of death, with chaplets on their heads, and my wife amid a throng of men, and my father weeping o'er some mischance. Let me draw near to them and inquire; lady, what strange stroke of fate hath fallen on the house?

MEG. Dearest of all mankind to me! O ray of light appearing to thy sire! art thou safe, and is thy coming just in time to help thy dear ones?

HER. What meanest thou? what is this confusion I find on my arrival, father?

MEG. We are being ruined; forgive me, old friend, if I have anticipated that which thou hadst a right to tell him; for woman's nature is perhaps more prone than man's to grief, and they are my children that were being led to death, which was my own lot too.

HER. Great Apollo! what a prelude to thy story!

MEG. Dead are my brethren, dead my hoary sire.

HER. How so? what befell him? who dealt the fatal blow?

MEG. Lycus, our splendid monarch, slew him.

HER. Did he meet him in fair fight, or was the land sick and weak?

MEG. Aye, from faction; now is he master of the city of Cadmus with its seven gates.

HER. Why hath panic fallen on thee and my aged sire?

MEG. He meant to kill thy father, me, and my children.

HER. Why, what had he to fear from my orphan babes?

MEG. He was afraid they might some day avenge Creon's death.

HER. What means this dress they wear, suited to the dead?

MEG. 'Tis the garb of death we have already put on.

HER. And were ye being haled to death? O woe is me!

MEG. Yes, deserted by every friend, and informed that thou wert dead.

HER. What put such desperate thoughts into your heads?

MEG. That was what the heralds of Eurystheus kept proclaiming.

HER. Why did ye leave my hearth and home?

MEG. He forced us; thy father was dragged from his bed.

HER. Had he no mercy, to ill-use the old man so?

MEG. Mercy forsooth![1] that goddess and he dwell far enough apart.

HER. Was I so poor in friends in my absence?

MEG. Who are the friends of a man in misfortune?

HER. Do they make so light of my hard warring with the Minyæ?

MEG. Misfortune, to repeat it to thee, has no friends.

HER. Cast from your heads these chaplets of death, look up to the light, for instead of the nether gloom your eyes

[1] Reading *αἰδώ γ'* (Nauck).

behold the welcome sun. I, meantime, since here is work for my hand, will first go raze this upstart tyrant's halls, and when I have beheaded the miscreant, I will throw him to dogs to tear; and every Theban who I find has played the traitor after my kindness, will I destroy with this victorious club; the rest will I scatter with my feathered shafts and fill Ismenus full of bloody corpses, and Dirce's clear fount shall run red with gore. For whom ought I to help rather than wife and children and aged sire? Farewell my labours! for it was in vain I accomplished them rather than succoured these. And yet I ought to die in their defence, since they for their sire were doomed; else what shall we find so noble in having fought a hydra and a lion at the hests of Eurystheus, if I make no effort to save my own children from death? No longer I trow, as heretofore, shall I be called Heracles the victor.

CHO. 'Tis only right that parents should help their children, their aged sires, and the partners of their marriage.

AMP. My son, 'tis like thee to show thy love for thy dear ones and thy hate for all that is hostile; only curb excessive hastiness.

HER. Wherein, father, am I now showing more than fitting haste?

AMP. The king hath a host of allies, needy villains though pretending to be rich, who[1] sowed dissension and o'erthrew the state with a view to plundering their neighbours; for the wealth they had in their houses was all spent, dissipated by their sloth. Thou was seen entering[2] the city; and, that being so, beware that thou bring not thy enemies together and be slain unawares.

HER. Little I reck if the whole city saw me; but happening to see a bird perched in an unlucky position, from

[1] Paley, though retaining lines 590-592, brings grave reasons for suspecting them.

[2] *ἐσελθών* (Kirchhoff.)

it I learnt that some trouble had befallen my house; so I purposely made my entry to the land by stealth.

AMP. For thy lucky coming hither,[1] go salute thy household altar, and let thy father's halls behold thy face. For soon will the king be here in person to drag away thy wife and children and murder them, and to add me to the bloody list. But if thou remain on the spot all will go well, and thou wilt profit by this security; but do not rouse thy city ere thou hast these matters well in train, my son.

HER. I will do so; thy advice is good; I will enter my house. After my return at length from the sunless den of Hades and[2] the maiden queen of hell, I will not neglect to greet first of all the gods beneath my roof.

AMP. Why, didst thou in very deed go to the house of Hades, my son?

HER. Aye, and brought to the light that three-headed monster.[3]

AMP. Didst worst him in fight, or receive him from the goddess?

HER. In fair fight; for I had been lucky enough to witness the rites of the initiated.[4]

AMP. Is the monster really lodged in the house of Eurystheus?

HER. The grove of Demeter and the city of Hermione are his prison.

AMP. Does not Eurystheus know that thou hast returned to the upper world?

HER. He knows not;[5] I came hither first to learn your news.

[1] So Klotz; but Paley translates "go and address good words to the hearth."

[2] τε was here added by Reiske.

[3] Cerberus.

[4] *i.e.*, the Eleusinian mysteries, initiation in which was thought to insure privileges in Hades.

[5] Reading with Matthiae οὐκ οἶδ' · ἵν'.

AMP. How is it thou wert so long beneath the earth?

HER. I stayed awhile attempting to bring back Theseus from Hades, father.

AMP. Where is he? gone to his native land?

HER. He set out for Athens right glad to have escaped from the lower world. Come, children, attend your father to the house. My entering in is fairer in your eyes, I trow, than my going out. Take heart, and no more let the tears stream from your eyes; thou too, dear wife, collect thy courage, cease from fear; leave go of my robe; for I cannot fly away, nor have I any wish to flee from those I love. Ah! they do not loose their hold, but cling to my garments all the more; were ye in such jeopardy? Well, I must lead them, taking them by the hand to draw them after me, like a ship when towing; for I too do not reject the care of my children; here all mankind are equal; all love their children, both those of high estate and those who are naught; 'tis wealth that makes distinctions among them; some have, others want; but all the human race loves its offspring.

[*Exeunt* HERACLES *and* MEGARA, *with their children.*

CHO. Dear to me is youth, but old age is ever hanging o'er my head, a burden heavier than Ætna's crags, casting its pall[1] of gloom upon my eyes. Oh! never may the wealth of Asia's kings tempt me to barter for houses stored with gold my happy youth, which is in wealth and poverty alike most fair! But old age is gloomy and deathly; I hate it; let it sink beneath the waves! Would it had never found its way to the homes and towns of mortal men, but were still drifting on for ever down the wind! Had the gods shown discernment and wisdom, as mortals count these things, men would have gotten youth twice over, a visible mark of worth amongst whomsoever found, and after death would these

[1] φάρος. This is the old reading, but many adopt the correction φάος.

have retraced their steps once more to the sun-light, while the mean man would have had but a single portion of life; and thus would it have been possible to distinguish the good and the bad, just as sailors know the number of the stars amid the clouds. But, as it is, the gods have set no certain boundary 'twixt good and bad, but time's onward roll brings increase only to man's wealth.

Never will I cease to link in one the Graces and the Muses, fairest union. Never may my lines be cast among untutored boors, but ever may I find a place among the crownèd choir! Yes, still the aged bard lifts up his voice of bygone memories; still is my song[1] of the triumphs of Heracles, whether Bromius the giver of wine is nigh, or the strains of the seven-stringed lyre and the Libyan flute are rising; not yet will I cease to sing the Muses' praise, my patrons in the dance. As the maids of Delos raise their song of joy, circling round the temple gates in honour of Leto's fair son, the graceful dancer; so I with my old lips will sing songs of victory at thy palace-doors, a song of my old age, such as sings the dying swan; for there is a goodly theme for minstrelsy; he is the son of Zeus; yet high above his noble birth tower his deeds of prowess,[2] for his toil secured this life of calm for man, having destroyed all fearsome beasts.

LYC. Ha! Amphitryon, 'tis high time thou camest forth from the palace; ye have been too long arraying yourselves in the robes and trappings of the dead. Come, bid the wife and children of Heracles show themselves outside the house, to die on the conditions you yourselves offered.

AMP. O king, thou dost persecute me in my misery and heapest insult upon me over and above the loss of my son; thou shouldst have been more moderate in thy zeal, though

[1] *ἀείδω*, Elmsley.

[2] *ἀρεταῖς*, a conjecture of Tyrwhitt's, adopted in the text by most editors.

thou art my lord and master. But since thou dost impose death's stern necessity on me, needs must I acquiesce and do thy will.

LYC. Pray, where is Megara? where are the children of Alcmena's son?

AMP. She, I believe, so far as I can guess from outside—

LYC. What grounds[1] hast thou to base thy fancy on?

AMP. Is sitting as a suppliant on the altar's hallowed steps.

LYC. Imploring them quite uselessly to save her life.

AMP. And calling on her dead husband, quite in vain.

LYC. He is nowhere near, and he certainly will never come.

AMP. No, unless perhaps a god should raise him from the dead.

LYC. Go to her and bring her from the palace.

AMP. By doing so I should become an accomplice in her murder.

LYC. Since thou hast this scruple, I, who have left fear behind, will myself bring out the mother and her children. Follow me, servants, that we may put an end[2] to this delay of our work to our joy. [*Exit* LYCUS.

AMP. Then go thy way along the path of fate; for what remains, maybe another will provide. Expect for thy evil deeds to find some trouble thyself. Ah! my aged friends, he is marching fairly to his doom; soon will he be entangled in the snare of the sword, thinking to slay his neighbours, the villain! I will hence, to see him fall dead; for the sight of a foe being slain and paying the penalty of his misdeeds affords pleasurable feelings. [*Exit* AMPHITRYON.

[1] Many editors put a mark of interrogation after τί χρῆμα; but Paley's view seems preferable.

[2] Instead of λύσωμεν many editors adopt Canter's conjecture λυσσωμεν.

CHO.[1] (1.) Evil has changed sides; he who was erst a mighty king is now turning his life backward into the road to Hades.

(2.) Hail to thee! Justice and heavenly retribution.

(3.) At last hast thou reached the goal where thy death will pay the forfeit,

(4.) For thy insults against thy betters.

(5.) Joy makes my tears burst forth.

(6.) There is come a retribution, which the prince of the land[2] never once thought in his heart would happen.

(7.) Come, old friends, let us look within to see if one we know has met the fate I hope.

LYC. (*within.*) Ah me! ah me!

CHO. (8.) Ha! how sweet to hear that opening note of his within the house; death is not far off him now.

(9.) Hark! the prince cries out in his agony; that preludes death.

LYC. (*within.*) O kingdom of Cadmus, by treachery I am perishing!

CHO. (10.) Thou wert thyself for making others perish; endure thy retribution; 'tis only the penalty of thy own deeds thou art paying.

(11.) Who was he, weak son of man, that aimed his silly saying at the blessed gods of heaven with impious blasphemy, maintaining that they are weaklings after all?

(12.) Old friends, our godless foe is now no more.

(13.) The house is still; let us to our dancing.

(14.) Yea, for fortune smiles upon my friends as I desire.[3]

Dances and banquets now prevail throughout the holy town of Thebes. For release from tears and respite from

[1] The following arrangement of lines is Dindorf's, adopted in Paley's text. Nauck has a different distribution.

[2] *i.e.*, Lycus, but Pflugk reads ἦλπισ' ἄν (1st person) and makes ἀνάξ (Heracles) the subject of ἔμολεν.

[3] Nauck regards this line with suspicion.

sorrow give birth to song. The upstart[1] king is dead and gone; our former monarch now is prince, having made his way even from the bourn of Acheron. Hope beyond all expectation is fulfilled. To heed the right and wrong is heaven's care.[2] 'Tis their gold and their good luck that lead men's hearts astray, bringing in their train unholy tyranny. For no man ever had the courage to reflect what reverses time might bring; but, disregarding law to gratify lawlessness, he shatters[3] in gloom the car of happiness. Deck thee with garlands, O Ismenus! break forth into dancing, ye paved streets of our seven-gated city! come Dirce, fount of waters fair; and joined with her ye daughters of Asopus, come from your father's waves to add your maiden voices to our hymn, the victor's prize that Heracles hath won. O Pythian rock, with forests crowned, and haunts of the Muses on Helicon! make my city and her walls re-echo[4] with cries of joy; where sprang the earth-born crop to view, a warrior-host with shields of brass, who are handing on their realm to children's children, a light divine to Thebes. All hail the marriage! wherein two bridegrooms shared; the one, a mortal; the other, Zeus, who came to wed the maiden sprung from Perseus; for[5] that marriage of thine, O Zeus, in days gone by has been proved to me a true story beyond all expectation; and time hath shown the lustre of Heracles' prowess, who emerged from caverns 'neath the earth after leaving Pluto's halls below. To me art thou a worthier lord than that base-born king, who now lets it be plainly seen in this struggle 'twixt armed warriors, whether justice still finds favour in heaven.

[*Catching sight of the spectre of* MADNESS.] Ha! see there,

[1] Reading καινὸς with Pierson.
[2] μέλουσι. So Canter.
[3] Reading ἔθρανσεν; and punctuating after εἰσορᾶν, not after διδούς.
[4] Reading ἠχεῖτ' with Bothe for ἴξετ' which Paley regards as corrupt.
[5] Reading ὡς for κα, (Musgrave).

my old comrades! is the same wild panic fallen on us all, what phantom is this I see hovering o'er the house? Fly, fly, bestir thy tardy steps! begone! away! O saviour prince, avert calamity from me!

IRIS. Courage, old men! she, whom you see, is Madness, daughter of night, and I am Iris, the handmaid of the gods. We have not come to do your city any hurt, but against the house of one man only is our warfare, even against him whom they call the son of Zeus and Alcmena. For until he had finished all his grievous toils, Destiny was preserving him, nor would father Zeus ever suffer me or Hera to harm him. But now that he hath accomplished the labours of Eurystheus, Hera is minded to brand him with the guilt of shedding kindred[1] blood by slaying his own children, and I am one with her. Come then, maid unwed, child of murky Night, harden thy heart relentlessly, send forth frenzy upon him, confound his mind even to the slaying of his children, drive him, goad him wildly on his mad career, shake out the sails of death, that when he has sent o'er Acheron's ferry that fair group of children by his own murderous hand, he may learn to know how fiercely against him the wrath of Hera burns and may also experience mine; otherwise, if he escape punishment, the gods will become as naught, while man's power will grow.

MAD. Of noble parents was I born, the daughter of Night, sprung from the blood of Uranus; and these prerogatives I hold, not to use them in anger against friends, nor have I any joy in visiting the homes[2] of men; and fain would I counsel Hera, before I see her make a mistake, and thee too, if ye will hearken to my words. This man, against whose[3] house thou art sending me, has made himself

[1] Reading *κοινὸν*, the correction of Wakefield for *καινὸν*.

[2] Reading *δόμους* for the corrupt *φίλους*; other suggestions are *φόνους* and *πόλεις*.

[3] As Paley remarks οὗ γε, the common reading can scarcely be right. *He suggests* for the sense οὗ μ' ἐπεισπίμπεις.

a name alike in heaven and earth; for, after taming pathless wilds and raging sea, he by his single might raised up again the honours of the gods when sinking before man's impiety; wherefore[1] I counsel thee, do not wish him dire mishaps.

IRIS. Spare us *thy* advice on Hera's and my schemes.

MAD. I seek to turn thy steps into the best path instead of into this bad one.

IRIS. 'Twas not to practise self-control that the wife of Zeus sent thee hither.

MAD. I call the sun-god to witness that herein I am acting against my will; but if indeed I must forthwith serve thee and Hera and follow you in full cry[2] as hounds follow the huntsman, why go I will; nor shall ocean with its moaning waves, nor the earthquake, nor the thunderbolt with blast of agony be half so furious as the headlong rush[3] I will make into the breast of Heracles; through his roof will I burst my way and swoop upon his house, after first slaying his children; nor shall their murderer know that he is killing his own-begotten babes, till he is released[4] from my madness. Behold him! see how even now he is wildly tossing his head at the outset, and rolling his eyes fiercely from side to side without a word; nor can he control his panting breath; but like a bull in act to charge, he bellows fearfully, calling on the goddesses of nether hell. Soon will I rouse thee to yet wilder dancing and sound a note of terror in thine ear. Soar away, O Iris, to Olympus on thy honoured course; while I unseen will steal into the halls of Heracles.

[*Exeunt* IRIS *and* MADNESS.

[1] Reading σοὶ δ'.

[2] Retaining the old reading ἐπιρροίβδην θ'. But the passage is probably corrupt. For the attempted rendering I am indebted to the note *ad loc.* in Hutchinson and Gray's edition of this play.

[3] στάδια δραμοῦμαι (Hermann).

[4] ὑφῦ (Hermann).

CHO.[1] Alas! alas! lament, O city; the son of Zeus, thy fairest bloom, is being cut down.

(1.) Woe is thee, Hellas! that wilt cast from thee thy benefactor, and destroy him as he madly, wildly dances where no pipe is heard.[2]

(2.) She is mounted on her car, the queen of sorrow and sighing, and is goading on her steeds, as if for outrage, the Gorgon child of night, with hundred hissing serpent-heads, Madness of the flashing eyes.

(3.) Soon hath the god changed his good fortune; soon will his children breathe their last, slain by a father's hand.

(4.) Ah me! alas! soon will vengeance, mad, relentless, lay low by a cruel death thy unhappy son, O Zeus, exacting a full penalty.

(5.) Alas, O house! the fiend begins her dance of death without the cymbal's crash, with no glad waving of the wine-god's staff.

(6.) Woe to these halls! toward bloodshed she moves, and not to pour libations[3] of the juice of the grape.

(7.) O children, haste to fly; that is the chant of death her piping plays.

(8.) Ah, yes! he is chasing the children. Never, ah! never will Madness lead her revel rout in vain.

(9.) Ah misery!

(10.) Ah me! how I lament that aged sire, that mother too that bore his babes in vain.

(11.) Look! look!

(12.) A tempest rocks the house; the roof is falling with it.

(13.) Oh! what art thou doing, son of Zeus?

(14.) Thou art sending hell's confusion against thy house, as erst did Pallas on Enceladus.

MES. Ye hoary men of eld!

[1] In the following distribution of lines Paley's text follows Dindorf's.

[2] Reading ἀναύλοις with Tyrwhitt.

[3] λοιβᾶς, Barnes.

CHO. Why, oh! why this loud address to me?

MES. Awful is the sight within!

CHO. No need for me to call another to announce that.

MES. Dead lie the children.

CHO. Alas!

MES. Ah weep! for here is cause for weeping.

CHO. A cruel murder, wrought by parents' hands!

MES. No words can utter more than we have suffered.

CHO. What, canst thou prove this piteous mischief was a father's outrage on his children? Tell me how these heaven-sent woes came rushing on the house; say how the children met their sad mischance.

MES. Victims to purify the house were stationed before the altar of Zeus, for Heracles had slain and cast from his halls the king of the land. There stood his group of lovely children, with his sire and Megara; and already the basket was being passed round the altar, and we were keeping holy silence. But just as Alcmena's son was bringing the torch in his right hand to dip it in the holy water,[1] he stopped without a word. And as their father lingered, his children looked at him; and lo! he was changed; his eyes were rolling; he was quite distraught; his eyeballs were bloodshot and starting from their sockets, and foam was oozing down his bearded cheek. Anon he spoke, laughing the while a madman's laugh, "Father, why should I sacrifice before I have slain Eurystheus, why kindle the purifying flame and have the toil twice over, when I might at one stroke so fairly end it all? Soon as I have brought the head of Eurystheus hither, I will cleanse my hands for those already slain. Spill the water, cast the baskets from your hands. Ho! give me now my bow and[2] club! To famed Mycenæ will I go; crow-bars and pick-axes must

[1] A lighted brand from the altar was dipped in the holy water, and those present were sprinkled with it.

[2] Reading τίς δ', Barnes.

I take, for I will heave from their very base with iron levers those city-walls which the Cyclopes squared with red plumb-line and mason's tools."

Then he set out, and though he had no chariot there, he thought he had, and was for mounting to its seat, and using a goad as though his fingers really held one. A twofold feeling filled his servants' breasts, half amusement, and half fear; and one looking to his neighbour said, "Is our master making sport for us, or is he mad?" But he the while was pacing to and fro in his house; and, rushing into the men's chamber, he thought he had reached the city of Nisus, albeit he had gone into his own halls. So he threw himself upon the floor, as if he were there, and made ready to feast. But after waiting a brief space he began saying he was on his way to the plains amid the valleys of the Isthmus; and then stripping himself of his mantle, he fell to competing with an imaginary rival, o'er whom he proclaimed himself victor with his own voice, calling on imaginary spectators to listen. Next, fancy carrying him to Mycenæ, he was uttering fearful threats against Eurystheus. Meantime his father caught him by his stalwart arm, and thus addressed him, "My son, what meanest thou hereby? What strange doings are these? Can it be that the blood of thy late victims has driven thee frantic?" But he, supposing it was the father of Eurystheus striving in abject supplication to touch his hand, thrust him aside, and then against his own children aimed his bow and made ready his quiver, thinking to slay the sons of Eurystheus. And they in wild affright darted hither and thithe one to his hapless mother's skirts, another to the shadow of a pillar, while a third cowered 'neath the altar like a bird. Then cried their mother, "O father, what art thou doing? dost mean to slay thy children?" Likewise his aged sire and all the gathered servants cried aloud. But he, hunting

the child round and round the column, in dreadful circles,[1] and coming face to face with him shot him to the heart; and he fell upon his back, sprinkling the stone pillars with blood as he gasped out his life. Then did Heracles shout for joy and boasted loud, "Here lies one of Eurystheus' brood dead at my feet, atoning for his father's hate." Against a second did he aim his bow, who had crouched at the altar's foot thinking to escape unseen. But ere he fired, the poor child threw himself at his father's knees, and, flinging his hand to reach his beard or neck, cried, "Oh! slay me not, dear father mine! I am thy child, thine own; 'tis no son of Eurystheus thou wilt slay."

But that other, with savage Gorgon-scowl, as the child now stood in range of his baleful archery, smote him on the head, as smites a smith his molten iron, bringing down his club upon the fair-haired boy, and crushed the bones. The second caught, away he hies to add a third victim to the other twain. But ere he could, the poor mother caught up her babe and carried him within the house and shut the doors; forthwith the madman, as though he really were at the Cyclopean walls, prizes open the doors with levers, and, hurling down their posts, with one fell shaft laid low his wife and child. Then in wild career he starts to slay his aged sire; but lo! there came a phantom,—so it seemed to us on-lookers,—of Pallas, with plumed helm,[2] brandishing a spear; and she hurled a rock against the breast of Heracles, which stayed him from his frenzied thirst for blood and plunged him into sleep; to the ground he fell, smiting his back against a column that had fallen on the floor in twain when the roof fell in. Thereon we rallied from our flight, and with the old man's aid bound him fast with knotted cords to the pillar, that on his awakening he might do no

[1] Reading *τόρνευμα* with Matthiae for *τόρευμα*. Others *πόρευμα*.

[2] Reading *ἐπιλόφῳ κάρᾳ*. Wakefield's correction of the corrupt *ἐπὶ λόφῳ κέαμ.*

further mischief. So there he sleeps, poor wretch! a sleep that is not blest, having murdered wife and children; nay, for my part I know not any son of man more miserable than he. [*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHO. That murder[1] wrought by the daughters of Danaus, whereof my native Argos wots, was formerly the most famous and notorious[2] in Hellas; but this hath surpassed and outdone those previous horrors. I could tell of the murder of that poor son of Zeus, whom Procne, mother of an only child, slew and offered to the Muses;[3] but thou hadst three children, wretched parent,[4] and all of them hast thou in thy frenzy slain. What groans or wails [what funeral dirge,] or chant of death am I to raise? Alas and woe! see, the bolted doors of the lofty palace are being rolled apart. Ah me! behold these children lying dead before their wretched father, who is sunk in awful slumber after shedding their blood.[5] Round him are bonds and cords, made fast with many a knot about the body of Heracles, and lashed to the stone columns of his house. While he, the aged sire, like mother-bird wailing her unfledged brood, comes hasting hither with halting steps on his bitter journey.

[*The palace doors opening disclose* HERACLES *lying asleep, bound to a shattered column.*

AMP. Softly, softly! ye aged sons of Thebes, let him sleep on and forget his sorrows.

[1] *i.e.*, of the sons of Ægyptus, to whom they were married.

[2] Reading ἄριστος, for which many editors give ἄπιστος after Musgrave.

[3] *i.e.*, Itys, whose murder by his mother, by becoming a theme for poets, was an offering to the Muses.

[4] The words ὦ ἔαις, for which Canter proposed ὦ δάϊε, are corrupt, and no certain emendation has been offered. Dindorf ὦ τάλαν. In l. 1024 Kirchhoff inserts σᾷ before μοίρᾳ. Lines 1025-6 are also corrupt. In the translation ἐς is omitted with Dobree, and νόμον, Paley's suggestion for χορὸν, adopted. The words bracketed are probably a gloss.

[5] ἐκ παίδων φόνου. So Dobree.

CHO. For thee, old friend, I weep and mourn, for the children too and that victorious chief.

AMP. Stand further off, make no noise nor outcry, rouse him not from his calm deep slumber.[1]

CHO. O horrible! all this blood—

AMP. Hush, hush! ye will be my ruin.

CHO. That he has spilt is rising up against him.

AMP. Gently raise your dirge of woe, old friends; lest he wake, and, bursting his bonds, [destroy the city,][2] rend his sire, and dash his house to pieces.

CHO. I cannot possibly speak lower.

AMP. Hush! let me note his breathing; come, let me put my ear close.

CHO. Is he sleeping?

AMP. Aye, that is he, a deathly sleep, having slain wife and children with the arrows of his twanging bow.

CHO. Ah! mourn—

AMP. Indeed I do.

CHO. The children's death;

AMP. Ah me!

CHO. And thy own son's doom.

AMP. Ah misery!

CHO. Old friend—

AMP. Hush! hush! he is turning over, he is waking! Oh! let me hide myself beneath the covert of yon roof.

CHO. Courage! darkness still broods o'er thy son's eye.

AMP. Oh! beware; 'tis not that I shrink from leaving the light after my miseries, poor wretch! but should he slay me that am his father, then will he be devising mischief on mischief, and to the avenging curse will add a parent's blood.

[1] Lines 1047-50 are full of corruption. By adopting Fix's reading *τὸν εὖ τ' ἰαύοντθ'*, a possible rendering is obtained, but the corruption probably goes deeper, and is unfortunately not confined to this passage.

[2] *ἀπολεῖ πόλιν*, regarded by Nauck as spurious.

CHO. Well for thee hadst thou died in that day, when, to win thy wife, thou didst go forth[1] to exact vengeance for her slain brethren by sacking the Taphians' sea-beat town.[2]

AMP. Fly, fly, my aged friends, haste from before the palace, escape his waking fury! For soon will he heap up fresh carnage on the old, ranging wildly once more[3] through the streets of Thebes.

CHO. O Zeus, why hast thou shown such savage hate against thine own son and plunged him in this sea of troubles?

HER. (*waking.*) Aha! my breath returns; I am alive; and my eyes resume their function, opening on the sky and earth and yon sun's darting beam; but how my senses reel! in what strange turmoil am I plunged! my fevered breath in quick spasmodic gasps escapes my lungs. How now? why am I lying here, made fast with cables like a ship, my brawny chest and arms tied to a shattered piece of masonry, with corpses for my neighbours; while o'er the floor my bow and arrows are scattered, that erst like trusty squires to my arm both kept me safe and were kept safe of me? Surely I am not come a second time to Hades' halls, having just returned from thence[4] for Eurystheus? No, I do not see Sisyphus with his stone, or Pluto, or his queen, Demeter's child. Surely I am distraught; I cannot remember[5] where I am. Ho, there! which of my friends is near or far to help me in my perplexity? For I have no clear knowledge of things once familiar.

[1] Reading with Matthiae ἔμολες ἐκπράξων.

[2] According to the legend Alcmena's brothers had been slain in war by the Taphians; whereupon she promised to wed the man who avenged their death.

[3] Reading with Nauck ἀν' αὖ βακχεύσει.

[4] Bothe and Paley conjecture ἐξ Ἄιδου for εἰς Ἄιδου; Pierson reads ἐντολαῖς.

[5] Reading with Nauck ἀμνημονῶ.

AMP. My aged friends, shall I approach the scene of my sorrow?

CHO. Yes, and let me go with thee, nor desert thee in thy trouble.

HER. Father, why dost thou weep and veil thy eyes, standing aloof from thy beloved son?

AMP. My child! mine still, for all thy misery.

HER. Why, what is there so sad in my case that thou dost weep?

AMP. That which might make any of the gods weep, were he to suffer so.

HER. A bold assertion that, but thou art not yet explaining what has happened.

AMP. Thine own eyes see that, if by this time thou art restored to thy senses.

HER.[1] Fill in thy sketch if any change awaits my life.

AMP. I will explain, if thou art no longer mad as a fiend of hell.

HER. God help us! what suspicions these dark hints of thine again excite!

AMP. I am still doubtful whether thou art in thy sober senses.

HER. *I* never remember being mad.

AMP. Am I to loose my son, old friends, or what?

HER. Loose and say who bound me; for I feel shame at this.

AMP. Rest content with what thou knowest of thy woes; the rest forego.

HER. Enough! I have no wish to probe thy silence.[2]

AMP. O Zeus, dost thou behold these deeds proceeding from the throne of Hera?

[1] Nauck places this and the next line after 1121.

[2] Retaining the old reading with Paley. Heath proposes to read the line thus, *ἀρκεῖ σιωπὴ γὰρ μαθεῖν ὃ βούλομαι*; "can silence tell me what I want to know?"

HER. What! have I suffered something from her enmity?

AMP. A truce to the goddess! attend to thy own troubles.

HER. I am undone; what mischance wilt thou unfold?

AMP. See here the corpses of thy children.

HER. O horror! what hideous sight is here? ah me!

AMP. My son, against thy children hast thou waged unnatural war.

HER. War! what meanst thou? who killed these?

AMP. Thou and thy bow and some god, whoso he be that is to blame.

HER. What sayst thou? what have I done? speak, father, thou messenger of evil.

AMP. Thou wert distraught; 'tis a sad explanation thou art asking.

HER. Was it I that slew my wife also?

AMP. Thy own unaided arm hath done all this.

HER. Ah, woe is me! a cloud of sorrow wraps me round.

AMP. The reason this that I lament thy fate.

HER. Did I dash my house to pieces or incite [1] others thereto?

AMP. Naught know I save this, that thou art utterly undone.

HER. Where did my frenzy seize me? where did it destroy me?

AMP. In the moment thou wert purifying thyself with fire at the altar.

HER. Ah me! [why do I spare my own life when I have taken that of my dear children?] [2] Shall I not hasten to leap from some sheer rock, or aim the sword against my heart and avenge my children's blood, or burn my body [3] in the

[1] ἢ 'βάκχευσ' which is the old reading. Hermann proposes ἐκβάκχευμ'.

[2] Paley regards this passage as a spurious supplement to οἴμοι which stands *extra metrum*.

[3] To complete this imperfect line Dindorf conjectures τήνδε τὴν ἐμὴν πρήσας.

fire and so avert from my life the infamy which now awaits me?

But hither I see Theseus coming to check my deadly counsels, my kinsman and friend. Now shall I stand revealed, and the dearest of my friends will see the pollution I have incurred by my children's murder. Ah, woe is me! what am I to do? Where can I find release from my sorrows? shall I take wings or plunge beneath the earth? Come,[1] let me veil my head in darkness; for I am ashamed of the evil I have done, and, since for these[2] I have incurred fresh blood-guiltiness, I would fain not harm the innocent.

THE. I am come, and others with me, young warriors from the land of Athens, encamped at present by the streams of Asopus, to help thy son, old friend. For a rumour reached the city of the Erechthidæ, that Lycus had usurped the sceptre of this land and was become your enemy even to battle. Wherefore I came making recompense for the former kindness of Heracles in saving me from the world below, if haply ye have any need of such aid as I or my allies can give, old prince.

Ha! what means this heap of dead upon the floor? Surely I have not delayed too long and come too late to check a revolution? Who slew these children? whose wife is this I see? Boys do not go to battle; nay, it must be some other strange mischance I here discover.

AMP. O king, whose home is that olive-clad hill![3]

THE. Why this piteous prelude in addressing me?

AMP. Heaven has afflicted us with grievous suffering.

THE. Whose be these children, o'er whom thou weepest?

AMP. My own son's children, woe is him! their father and butcher both was he, hardening his heart to the bloody deed.

[1] Paley proposes to supply the lacuna by reading *ἀντιτείνων*.

[2] *τῶνδε*, Kirchhoff. [3] *i.e.*, the Acropolis of Athens.

THE. Hush! good words only!

AMP. I would I could obey![1]

THE. What dreadful words!

AMP. Fortune has spread her wings, and we are ruined, ruined.

THE. What meanest thou? what hath he done?

AMP. Slain them in a wild fit of frenzy with arrows dipped in the venom of the hundred-headed hydra.

THE. This is Hera's work; but who lies there among the dead, old man?

AMP. My son, my own enduring son, that marched with gods to Phlegra's plain, there to battle with giants and slay them, warrior that he was.

THE. Ah, woe for him! whose fortune was e'er so curst as his?

AMP. Never wilt thou find another that hath borne a larger share of suffering or been more fatally deceived.

THE. Why doth he veil his head, poor wretch, in his robe?

AMP. He is ashamed to meet thine eye; his kinsman's kind intent and his children's blood make him abashed.

THE. But I come to sympathize;[2] uncover him.

AMP. My son, remove that mantle from thine eyes, throw it from thee, show thy face unto the sun; a counterpoise to weeping is battling for the mastery.[3] In suppliant wise I entreat thee, as I grasp thy beard, thy knees, thy hands, and let fall the tear from my old eyes. O my child! restrain thy savage lion-like temper, for thou art rushing forth on an

[1] Paley reads ἐπαγγέλλεις, *i.e.*, "you tell me to speak good words, and I wish I could."

[2] Reading ὡς συναλγῶν γ' the conjecture of Wakefield.

[3] Hermann explains this obscure phrase as meaning, "friendship for Theseus, a weighty motive, is trying to make you show your face quite as much as grief is inducing you to cover it."

unholy course[1] of bloodshed, eager to join mischief to mischief.

THE. What ho! To thee I call who art huddled there in thy misery, show to thy friends thy face; for no darkness is black enough to hide thy sad mischance. Why dost thou wave thy hand at me, signifying murder? is it that I may not be polluted by speaking with thee? If I share thy misfortune, what is that to me? For if[2] I too had luck in days gone by, I must refer it to the time when thou didst bring me safe from the dead to the light of life. I hate a friend whose gratitude grows old; one who is ready to enjoy his friends' prosperity but unwilling to sail in the same ship with them when their fortune lours. Arise, unveil thy head, poor wretch! and look on me. The gallant soul endures without a word such blows as heaven deals.

HER. O Theseus, didst thou witness this struggle with my children?

THE. I heard of it, and now I see the horrors thou meanest.

HER. Why then hast thou unveiled my head to the sun?

THE. Why have I? Thou, a man, canst not pollute what is of God.

HER. Fly, luckless wretch, from my unholy taint.

THE. The avenging fiend goes not forth from friend to friend.[3]

HER. For this I thank thee; I do not regret the service I did thee.

THE. While I, for kindness then received, now show my pity for thee.

HER. Ah yes! I am a piteous object, a murderer of my own sons.

[1] Reading *δρόμον*, Reiske.

[2] Adopting Kirchhoff's most plausible correction *κεἰ* for *καὶ*.

[3] *i.e.*, where there was no enmity on earth, there could be no *ἀλάστωρ* after death.

THE. I weep for thee in thy changed fortunes.

HER. Didst ever find another more afflicted?

THE. Thy misfortunes reach from earth to heaven.

HER. Therefore am I resolved on death.

THE. Dost thou suppose the gods attend to these thy threats?

HER. Remorseless hath heaven been to me; so I will prove the like to it.

THE. Hush! lest thy presumption add to thy sufferings.

HER. My barque is freighted full with sorrow; there is no room to stow aught further.

THE. What wilt thou do? whither is thy fury drifting thee?

HER. I will die and return to that world below whence I have just come.

THE. Such language is fit for any common fellow.

HER. Ah! thine is the advice of one outside sorrow's pale.

THE. Are these indeed the words of Heracles, the much-enduring?

HER. Never so much as this though. Endurance must have a limit.[1]

THE. Is this man's benefactor, his chiefest friend?

HER. Man brings no help to me; no! Hera has her way.

THE. Never will Hellas suffer thee to die through sheer perversity.

HER. Hear me a moment, that I may enter the lists with arguments in answer to thy admonitions; and I will unfold to thee why life now as well as formerly has been unbearable to me. First I am the son of a man who incurred the guilt of blood, before he married my mother Alcmena, by slaying her aged sire.[2] Now when the foundation is badly laid at

[1] Reading ἐν μέτρῳ, Hermann.

[2] Amphitryon had killed Electryon.

birth, needs must the race be cursed with woe; and Zeus, whoever this Zeus may be, begot me as a butt for Hera's hate; yet be not thou vexed thereat, old man; for thee rather than Zeus do I regard as my father. Then whilst I was yet being suckled, that bride of Zeus did foist into my cradle fearsome snakes to compass my death. After I was grown to man's estate, of all the toils I then endured what need to tell? of all the lions, Typhons triple-bodied, and giants that I slew; or of the battle I won against the hosts of four-legged Centaurs? or how when I had killed the hydra, that monster with a ring of heads with power to grow again, I passed through countless other toils besides and came unto the dead to fetch to the light at the bidding of Eurystheus the three-headed hound, hell's porter. Last, ah, woe is me! have I perpetrated this bloody deed to crown the sorrows of my house with my children's murder. To this sore strait am I come; no longer may I dwell in Thebes, the city that I love; for suppose I stay, to what temple or gathering of friends shall I repair? For mine is no curse that invites address. Shall I to Argos? how can I, when I am an exile from my country? Well, is there a single other city I can fly to? And if there were, am I to be looked at askance as a marked man, branded[1] by cruel stabbing tongues, "Is not this the son of Zeus that once murdered wife and children? Plague take him from the land!"

Now to one who was erst called happy, such changes are a grievous thing; though he who is always unfortunate feels no such pain, for sorrow is his birthright. This, methinks, is the piteous pass I shall one day come to; earth, for instance, will cry out forbidding me to touch her, the sea and the river-springs will refuse me a crossing, and I shall

[1] Reading *κηλιδούμενοι*, Hermann's correction of *κληδουχούμενοι*, a very doubtful word explained by Matthiae as meaning "harassed by being kept under close observation."

become like Ixion who revolves in chains upon that wheel.[1] Wherefore[2] this is best, that henceforth I be seen by none of the Hellenes, amongst whom in happier days I lived in bliss. What right have I to live? what profit can I have in the possession of a useless, impious life[3]? So let that noble wife of Zeus break forth in dancing, beating with buskined foot on heaven's bright floor;[4] for now hath she worked her heart's desire in utterly confounding the chiefest of Hellas' sons. Who would pray to such a goddess? Her jealousy of Zeus for his love of a woman hath destroyed the benefactors of Hellas, guiltless though they were.

CHO. This is the work of none other of the gods than the wife of Zeus; thou art right in that surmise.

THE. . . . . .[5] rather than to go on suffering. There is not a man alive that hath wholly 'scaped misfortune's taint, nor any god either, if what poets sing is true. Have they not intermarried in ways that law forbids? Have they not thrown fathers into ignominious chains to gain the sovereign power? Still they inhabit Olympus and brave the issue of their crimes. And yet what shalt thou say in thy defence, if thou, a child of man, dost kick against the pricks of fate, while they do not? Nay, then, leave Thebes in compliance with the law,[6] and come with me to the city of Pallas. There, when I have purified thee of thy pollution, will I give thee temples and the half of all I have. Yea, I will give thee all those presents I received from the citizens for saving their children, seven sons and daughters seven, in the day I slew

[1] ἁρματήλατον, Musgrave.

[2] Reading πρὸς ταῦτ', Nauck.

[3] Reading βίοτον, Nauck.

[4] Reading δῖον πέδον, the variation adopted by Nauck.

[5] Scaliger first noticed that something was wanting before l. 1313. The sense is thus supplied by Paley, "I cannot advise you to die by your own hand," etc. Paley also assigns lines 1311-12 to the Chorus rather than to Theseus.

[6] Which forbade murderers to reside in their own city.

the bull of Crete;[1] for I have plots of land assigned me throughout the country; these shall henceforth be called after thee by men, whilst thou livest; and at thy death, when thou art gone to Hades' halls, the city of Athens shall unite in exalting thy honour with sacrifices and a monument of stone. For 'tis a noble crown for citizens to win from Hellas, even a reputation fair, by helping a man of worth. This is the return that I will make thee for saving me, for now art thou in need of friends. [But when heaven delights to honour a man, he has no need of friends; for the god's aid, when he chooses to give it, is enough.[2]]

HER. Tush! this is quite beside the question of my troubles. For my part, I do not believe that the gods indulge in unholy unions; and as for putting fetters on parents' hands, I have never thought that worthy of credit, nor will I now be so persuaded, nor again that one god is naturally lord and master of another. For the deity, if he be really such, has no wants; these are miserable fictions of the poets. But I, for all my piteous plight, reflected whether I should let myself be branded as a coward for giving up my life. For whoso schooleth not his frail mortal nature to bear fate's buffets as he ought, will never be able to withstand even a man's weapon. I will harden my heart against[3] death and seek thy city, with grateful thanks for all thou offerest me.

Of countless troubles have I tasted, God knows, but never yet did I faint at any or shed a single tear; nay, nor ever dreamt that I should come to this, to let the tear-drop fall. But now, it seems, I must be fortune's slave. Well, let it pass; old father mine, thou seest me go forth to exile, and in me beholdest my own children's murderer. Give them burial, and

[1] *i.e.*, the Minotaur.

[2] Paley and Nauck both regard these lines as spurious.

[3] So Paley, reading ἐγκαρτερήσω. Madvig ἐγκαρτερήσων with no stop after βίλος.

lay them out in death with the tribute of a tear, for the law forbids my doing so. Rest[1] their heads upon their mother's bosom and fold them in her arms, sad pledges of our union, whom I, alas! unwittingly did slay. And when thou hast buried these dead, live on here still, in bitterness maybe, but still [constrain thy soul to share my sorrows].[2] O children! he who begat you, your own father, hath been your destroyer, and ye have had no profit of my triumphs, all my restless toil to win you a fair name in life,[3] a glorious guerdon from a sire. Thee too, unhappy wife, this hand hath slain, a poor return to make thee for preserving mine honour so safe, for all the weary watch thou long hast kept within my house. Alas for you, my wife, my sons! and woe for me, how sad my lot, cut off from wife and child! Ah! these kisses, bitter-sweet! these weapons which 'tis pain to own! I am not sure whether to keep or let them go; dangling at my side they thus will say, "With us didst thou destroy children and wife; we are thy children's slayers, and thou keepest us." Shall I carry them after that? what answer can I make? Yet, am I to strip me of these weapons, the comrades of my glorious career in Hellas, and put myself thereby in the power of my foes, to die a death of shame? No! I must not let them go, but keep them, though it grieve me. In one thing, Theseus, help my misery; come to Argos with me and aid in settling my reward for bringing Cerberus thither; lest, if I go all alone, my sorrow for my sons do me some hurt.

O land of Cadmus, and all ye folk of Thebes! cut off your hair, and mourn with me; go to my children's burial, and with united dirge lament alike the dead and me; for on all of us hath Hera inflicted the same cruel blow of destruction.

THE. Rise, unhappy man! thou hast had thy fill of tears.

[1] Paley assumes the loss of a line before this.
[2] Nauck regards this line as spurious.
[3] Reading *ἐκμοχθῶν βίου*.

HER. I cannot rise; my limbs are rooted here.

THE. Yea, even the strong are o'erthrown by misfortunes.

HER. Ah! would I could grow into a stone upon this spot, oblivious of trouble!

THE. Peace! give thy hand to a friend and helper.

HER. Nay, let me not wipe off the blood upon thy robe.

THE. Wipe it off and spare not; I will not say thee nay.

HER. Reft of my own sons, I find thee as a son to me.

THE. Throw thy arm about my neck; I will be thy guide.

HER. A pair of friends in sooth are we, but one a man of sorrows. Ah! aged sire, this is the kind of man to make a friend.

AMP. Blest in her sons, the country that gave him birth!

HER. O Theseus, turn me back again to see my babes.

THE. What charm dost think to find in this to soothe thy soul?

HER. I long to do so, and would fain embrace my sire.

AMP. Here am I, my son; thy wish is no less dear to me.

THE. Hast thou so short a memory for thy troubles?

HER. All that I endured of yore was easier to bear than this.

THE. If men see thee play the woman, they will scoff.

HER.[1] Have I by living grown so abject in *thy* sight? 'twas not so once, methinks.

THE. Aye, too much so; for how dost show thyself the glorious Heracles of yore?

HER. What about thyself? what kind of hero wert thou when in trouble in the world below?

THE. I was worse than anyone as far as courage went.

[1] The next two lines are extremely obscure, and very probably the text is corrupt.

HER. How then canst thou say of me, that I am abased by my troubles?

THE. Forward!

HER. Farewell, my aged sire!

AMP. Farewell to thee, my son!

HER. Bury my children as I said.

AMP. But who will bury me, my son?

HER. I will.

AMP. When wilt thou come?

HER. After thou hast buried my children.

AMP. How?

HER. I will fetch thee from Thebes to Athens. But carry my children within, a grievous burden to the earth. And I, after ruining my house by deeds of shame, will follow in the wake of Theseus, a total wreck. Whoso prefers wealth or might to the possession of good friends, thinketh amiss.

CHO. With grief and many a bitter tear we go our way, robbed of all we prized most dearly.

THE PHŒNICIAN MAIDENS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JOCASTA.
OLD RETAINER.
ANTIGONE.
CHORUS OF PHŒNICIAN MAIDENS.
POLYNICES.
ETEOCLES.
CREON.
TEIRESIAS.
MENŒCEUS.
FIRST MESSENGER.
SECOND MESSENGER.
ŒDIPUS.

SCENE.—Before the royal palace at Thebes.

THE PHŒNICIAN MAIDENS.

Joc. O sun-god, who cleavest thy way along the starry
', mounted on golden-studded car, rolling on thy path
flame behind fleet coursers, how curst the beam
ou didst shed on Thebes, the day that Cadmus left
œnicia's realm beside the sea and reached this land!
: it was that in days long gone wedded Harmonia, the
ughter of Cypris, and begat Polydore from whom they say
ung Labdacus, and Laius from him. I am known as the
ughter of Menœceus, [and Creon is my brother by the
ne mother.[1]] Men call me Jocasta, for so my father named
, and I am married to Laius. Now when he was still
ldless after being wedded to me a long time, he went
l questioned Phœbus, craving moreover that our love
ght be crowned with sons born to his house. But the god
l, "King of Thebes for horses famed! seek not to beget
ldren against the will of heaven; for if thou beget a
, that child shall slay thee, and all thy house shall wade
ough blood." But he, yielding to his lust in a drunken
begat a son of me, and when his babe was born, con-
ous of his sin and of the god's warning, he gave the child to
pherds to expose in Hera's meadow on mount Cithæron,
:er piercing his ankles with iron spikes; whence it was
t Hellas named him Œdipus].[2] But the keepers of the

[1] Dindorf and Paley regard this line as spurious.

[2] Lines 26-7 are rejected by Paley, though the etymology of Œdipus, "the swollen-footed," is certainly in the style of Euripides.

horses of Polybus finding him took him home and laid him in the arms of their mistress. So she suckled the child that I had born and persuaded her husband she was its mother. Soon as my son was grown to man's estate, the tawny beard upon his cheek, either because he had guessed the fraud or learnt it from another, he set out for the shrine of Phœbus, eager to know for certain who his parents were; and likewise Laius, my husband, was on his way thither, anxious to find out if the child he had exposed was dead. And they twain met where the branching roads to Phocis unite;[1] and the charioteer of Laius called to him, "Out of the way, stranger, room for my lord!" But he, with never a word, strode on in his pride; and the horses with their hoofs drew blood from the tendons of his feet. Then—but why need I tell aught beyond the sad issue?—son slew father, and taking his chariot gave it to Polybus his foster-father. Now when the Sphinx was grievously harrying our city after my husband's death, my brother Creon proclaimed that he would wed me to any who should guess the riddle of that crafty maiden. By some strange chance, my own son, Œdipus, guessed the Sphinx's riddle, and so he became king of this land and received its sceptre as his prize, and married his mother, all unwitting, luckless wretch! nor did I his mother know that I was wedded to my son; and I bore him two sons, Eteocles and the hero Polynices, and two daughters as well; the one her father called Ismene, the other, which was the elder, I named Antigone. Now when Œdipus, that awful sufferer, learnt that I his wedded wife was his mother too, he inflicted a ghastly outrage upon his eyes, tearing the bleeding orbs with a golden brooch. But since my sons have grown to bearded men, they have confined their father closely, that his misfortune, needing as it did full many a shift to hide it, might be for-

[1] *i.e.*, at the junction of the roads from Corinth and Thebes to Delphi.

gotten. He is still living in the palace, but his misfortunes have so unhinged him that he imprecates the most unholy curses on his sons, praying that they may have to draw the sword before they share this house between them. So they, fearful that heaven may accomplish his prayer if they dwell together, have made an agreement, arranging that Polynices, the younger, should first leave the land in voluntary exile, while Eteocles should stay and hold the sceptre for a year and then change places. But as soon as Eteocles was seated high in power, he refused to give up the throne, and drove Polynices into exile from the kingdom; so Polynices went to Argos and married into the family of Adrastus, and having collected a numerous force of Argives is leading them hither; and he is come up against our seven-gated walls, demanding the sceptre of his father and his share in the kingdom. Wherefore I, to end their strife, have prevailed on one son to meet the other under truce, before appealing to arms; and the messenger I sent tells me that he will come. O Zeus, whose home is heaven's radiant vault, save us, and grant that my sons may be reconciled! For thou, if thou art really wise, must not suffer the same poor mortal to be for ever wretched. [*Exit* JOCASTA.

OLD RET. (*From the roof.*) Antigone, choice blossom in a father's house, although thy mother allowed thee at thy earnest entreaty to leave thy maiden chamber for the topmost story of the house, thence to behold the Argive host, yet stay a moment that I may first reconnoitre the path, whether there be any of the citizens visible on the road, lest reproach, little as it matters to a slave like me, fasten on thee, my royal mistress; and when I am quite sure I will tell thee everything that I saw and heard from the Argives, when I carried the terms of the truce to and fro between this city and Polynices. [*After a slight pause.*] No, there is no citizen approaching the palace; so mount the ancient cedar steps, and view the plains that skirt

Ismenus and the fount of Dirce to see the mighty host of foemen.

ANT. Stretch out thy hand to me from the stairs, the hand of age to youth, helping me to mount.

OLD RET. There! clasp it, my young mistress; thou art come at a lucky moment; for Pelasgia's host is just upon the move, and their several contingents are separating.

ANT. O Hecate,[1] dread child of Latona! the plain is one blaze of bronze.

OLD RET. Ah! this is no ordinary home-coming of Polynices; with many a knight and clash of countless arms he comes.

ANT. Are the gates fast barred, and the brazen bolts[2] shot home into Amphion's walls of stone?

OLD RET. Never fear! all is safe within the town. But mark him who cometh first, if thou wouldst learn his name.

ANT. Who is that with the white crest, who marches in the van, lightly bearing on his arm a buckler all of bronze?

OLD RET. A chieftain, lady—

ANT. Who is he? whose son? his name? tell me, old man.

OLD RET. Mycenæ claims him for her son; in Lerna's glens he dwells, the prince Hippomedon. ①

ANT. Ah! how proud and terrible his mien! like to an earth-born giant he moves, with stars engraved upon his targe, resembling not a child of earth.

OLD RET. Dost see yon chieftain[3] crossing Dirce's stream?

ANT. His harness is quite different. Who is that?

[1] Hecate is invoked as the sender of all sudden or appalling sights.

[2] Following the reading in Paley's text, which, however, is in some way faulty, as he points out. His own suggestion is *ἆρα πύλαις κλῃθρων χαλκόδετ' ἐμβόλα.*

[3] Some MSS., but not the best, contain the word *λοχαγόν* after *ὕδωρ*. *Kirchhoff* omits it. *τὸν δ'* is Porson's correction for *τόνδ'*.

OLD RET. Tydeus, the son of Œneus; true Ætolian spirit fires his breast.

ANT. Is this he, old man, who wedded a sister of the wife of Polynices? What a foreign look his armour has! a half-barbarian he!

OLD RET. Yes, my child; all Ætolians carry shields, and are most unerring marksmen with their darts.

ANT. How art thou so sure of these descriptions, old man?

OLD RET. I carefully noted the blazons on their shields before [when I went with the terms of the truce to thy brother[1]]; so when I see them now I know who carry them.

ANT. Who is that youth passing close to the tomb of Zethus, with long flowing hair, but a look of fury in his eye? is he a captain?[2] for crowds of warriors follow at his heels.

OLD RET. That is Parthenopæus, Atalanta's son.

ANT. May Artemis, who hies o'er the hills with his mother, lay him low with an arrow, for coming against my city to sack it!

OLD RET. May it be so, my daughter; but with justice are they come hither, and my fear is that the gods will take the rightful view.[3]

ANT. Where is he who was born of the same mother as I was by a cruel destiny? Oh! tell me, old friend, where Polynices is.

OLD RET. He is yonder, ranged next to Adrastus near the tomb of Niobe's seven unwed daughters. Dost see him?

ANT. I see him, yes! but not distinctly; 'tis but the outline of his form, the semblance of his stalwart limbs I see.

[1] Probably interpolated from line 97 to explain *τότε*.

[2] The old copies assigned the single word λοχαγός to the Παιδαγωγός; the next sentence being regarded as an exclamation by Antigone, "what a crowd follows him!" But the correction of Markland, here followed, is now generally adopted.

[3] *i.e.*, uphold the justice of the enemy's cause.

Would I could speed through the sky, swift as a cloud before the wind, towards my own dear brother, and throw my arms about my darling's neck, so long, poor boy! an exile. How bright his golden weapons flash like the sun-god's morning rays!

OLD RET. He will soon be here, to fill thy heart with joy, according to the truce.

ANT. Who is that, old man, on yonder car driving snow-white steeds?

OLD RET. That, lady, is the prophet Amphiaraus; with him are the victims, whose streaming blood the thirsty earth will drink.[1]

ANT. Daughter of Latona[2] with the dazzling zone, O moon, thou orb of golden light! how quietly, with what restraint he drives, goading first one horse, then the other![3] But where is Capaneus who utters those dreadful threats against this city?

OLD RET. Yonder he is, calculating how he may scale the towers, taking the measure of our walls from base to summit.

ANT. O Nemesis, with booming thunder-peals of Zeus and blazing levin-light, thine it is to silence such presumptuous boasting. Is this the man, who says[4] he will give the maids of Thebes as captives of his spear to Mycenæ's dames, to Lerna's Trident,[5] and the waters of Amymone, dear to

[1] Reading γῆς φιλαιμάτου ῥοαί, which the Schol. found as well as φίλαίματοι. Musgrave changes ῥοαί into χοαί.

[2] Reading with Badham Λατοῦς for Ἀλίου.

[3] This passage is corrupt; how far so it is difficult to say. The meaning supplied by the Schol. for μεταφέρων has no parallel, though it is hard to see what else it can mean if genuine.

[4] Paley, to complete the sense and metre, adds λέγει after περιβαλὼν.

[5] τριαινα. According to the Schol. there was a place called Triaena or "the Trident" in Argolis; so called because Poseidon struck the ground with his trident and caused a fountain to appear on the spot from which he carried off Amymone, one of the Danaids.

Poseidon, when he has thrown the toils of slavery round them? Never, never, Artemis, my queen revered, child of Zeus with locks of gold, may I endure the yoke of slavery!

OLD RET. My daughter, go within, and abide beneath the shelter of thy maiden chamber, now that thou hast had thy wish and seen all that thy heart desired; for I see a crowd of women moving toward the royal palace, confusion reigning in the city. Now the race of women by nature loves scandal; and if they get some slight handle for their gossip they exaggerate it, for they seem to take a pleasure in saying everything bad of one another.

[*Exeunt* ANTIGONE *and* OLD RETAINER.

CHO. From the Tyrian main I come, an offering choice for Loxias from a Phœnician isle, to minister to Phœbus in his halls, where his fane lies nestling 'neath the snow-swept peaks of Parnassus; over the Ionian sea I rowed[1] my course, for above the plains unharvested,[2] that fringe the coast of Sicily, the boisterous west-wind coursed, piping sweetest music in the sky.

Chosen[3] from my city as beauty's gift for Loxias, to the land of Cadmus I came, sent thither to the towers of Laius, the home of my kin, the famous sons of Agenor; and there I became the handmaid of Phœbus, dedicated like his offerings of wrought gold. But as yet the water of Castaly is waiting for me to bedew the maiden glory of my tresses for the service of Phœbus.

Hail! thou rock that kindlest bright fire above the twin-peaked heights of Dionysus. Hail! thou vine, that, day by day, makest the lush bunches of thy grapes to drip. Hail!

[1] The meaning seems to be that the ship had to be rowed because an adverse west-wind blew from Sicily.

[2] *i.e.*, the sea.

[3] It is usual for strophe and antistrophe to begin with a new sentence; so Paley suggests a full stop at κελάδημα, and the omission of δέ after Καδμείων. Nauck also punctuates thus.

awful cavern of the serpent, and the god's outlook on the hills, and sacred mount by snow-storms lashed! would I were now circling in the dance of the deathless[1] god, free from wild alarms, having left Dirce ere this for the vales of Phœbus at the centre of the world! But now I find the impetuous god of war is come to battle before these walls, and hath kindled murder's torch in this city. God grant he fail! for a friend's sorrows are also mine; and if this land with its seven towers suffer any mischance, Phœnicia's realm must share it. Ah me! our stock is one; all children we of Io, that hornèd maid, whose sorrows I partake. Around the city a dense array of serried shields is rousing the spectre[2] of bloody strife, whose issue Ares shall soon learn to his cost, if he brings upon the sons of Œdipus the horrors of the curse.[3] O Argos, city of Pelasgia! I dread thy prowess and the vengeance Heaven sends; for he who cometh against our home in full panoply is entering the lists with justice on his side.

POL. Those who kept watch and ward at the gate admitted me so readily within the walls that my only fear is, that now they have caught me in their toils, they will not let me out unscathed; so I must turn my eye in every direction, hither and thither, to guard against all treachery. Armed with this sword, though, I shall inspire myself with the confidence born of boldness. [*Starting.*] What ho! who goes there? or is it an idle sound I fear? Everything seems a danger to venturous spirits, when their feet begin to tread an enemy's country. Still I trust my mother, and at the same time mistrust her for persuading me to come hither under truce.

[1] Adopting Porson's conjecture, *ἀθανάτου*, *i.e.*, Apollo; it is hard to refer the feminine to any goddess, unless, as Paley suggests, the worship of Phœbus and Artemis went on together. Probably there is further corruption in the passage.

[2] *σχῆμα*, but perhaps *σῆμα* should be read.

[3] *i.e.*, the curse invoked by Œdipus on his sons.

Well, there is help at hand, for the altar's hearth is close and there are people in the palace. Come, let me sheath my sword in its dark scabbard and ask these maidens standing near the house, who they are.

Ladies of another land, tell me from what country ye come to the halls of Hellas.

CHO. Phœnicia is my native land where I was born and bred; and Agenor's children's children sent me hither as a first-fruits of the spoils of war for Phœbus; but when the noble son of Œdipus was about to escort me to the hallowed oracle and the altars of Loxias, came Argives meantime against his city. Now tell me in return who *thou* art that comest to this fortress of the Theban realm with its seven gates.

POL. My father was Œdipus, the son of Laius; my mother Jocasta, daughter of Menœceus; and I am called Polynices by the folk of Thebes.

CHO. O kinsman of Agenor's race, my royal masters who sent me hither, at thy feet, prince, I throw myself, according to the custom of my home. At last art thou come to thy native land; at last! Hail to thee! all hail! Come forth, my honoured mistress, open wide the doors. Dost hear, O mother of this chief? Why art thou delaying to leave the sheltering roof to fold thy son in thy embrace?

JOC. Maidens, I hear you call in your Phœnician tongue, and my old feet drag their tottering steps to meet my son.[1] O my son, my son, at last after many a long day I see thee face to face; throw thy arms about thy mother's bosom; reach hither thy cheek to me and thy dark locks of clustering hair, o'ershadowing my neck therewith. Hail to thee! all hail! scarce now restored to thy mother's arms, when hope and expectation both were dead.

[1] The reading of lines 301-3 is very uncertain. Paley's text is followed here and in the next six lines, though he expresses suspicion of the received reading.

What can I say to thee? how recall in every way,[1] by word, by deed, the bliss of days long past, expressing my joy in the mazy measures of the dance? Ah! my son, thou didst leave thy father's halls desolate, when thy brother's despite drove thee thence in exile. Truly thou wert missed alike by thy friends and Thebes. This was why I cut off my silvered locks and let them fall for grief[2] with many a tear, not clad in robes of white, my son, but instead thereof taking for my wear these sorry sable tatters; while within the palace that aged one with sightless orbs, ever nursing the sorrow of a double regret for the pair of brethren estranged from their home, rushed to lay hands upon himself with the sword or by the noose suspended o'er his chamber-roof, moaning his curses on his sons; and now he buries himself in darkness, weeping ever and lamenting. And thou, my child,—I hear thou hast taken an alien to wife and art begetting children to thy joy in thy home; they tell me thou art courting a foreign alliance, a ceaseless regret to me thy mother and to Laius thy ancestor, to have this woful marriage foisted on us. 'Twas no hand of mine that lit for thee the marriage-torch, as custom ordains and as a happy mother ought;[3] no part had Ismenus at thy wedding in supplying the luxurious bath;[4] and there was silence through the streets of Thebes, what time thy young bride entered her home. Curses on them! whether it be the sword or strife or thy sire that is to blame, or heaven's visitation that hath burst so riotously upon the

[1] *ἅπαντα.* So the MSS., but Paley reads *ἀπαναχοῦ.*

[2] *ἀνεῖσα πένθει.* Hermann's emendation.

[3] *ὡς πρέπει,* rejected by Nauck.

[4] The ordinary reading is almost certainly corrupt; Paley's suggested correction gives a possible meaning and is not very sweeping, *i.e.*, *Ἰσμηνοῦ ἱκηδεύθης.* The *λουτροφόρος* at Athens was the boy or girl, who, as next of kin to the bridegroom, fetched him water from the fountain Callirrhoë on his wedding day. This function is here regarded as transferred to the native river of Thebes.

house of Œdipus; for on me is come all the anguish of these troubles.

CHO. Wondrous dear to woman is the child of her travail, and all her race hath some affection for its babes.

POL. Mother, I have come amongst enemies wisely or foolishly; but all men needs must love their native land; whoso saith otherwise is pleased to say so but his thoughts are turned elsewhere. So fearful was I and in such terror, lest my brother might slay me by treachery that I made my way through the city sword in hand, casting my eyes all round me. My only hope is the truce and thy plighted word which induced me to enter my paternal walls; and many a tear I shed by the way, seeing after a weary while my home and the altars of the gods, the training ground, scene of my childhood, and Dirce's founts from which I was unjustly driven to sojourn in a strange city, with tears ever gushing from mine eyes. Yea, and to add to my grief I see thee with hair cut short and clad in sable robe;[1] woe is me for my sorrows!

How terrible, dear mother, is hatred 'twixt those once near and dear; how hard it makes all reconciliation![2] What doth my aged sire within the house, his light all darkness now? what of my sisters twain? Ah! they, I know, bewail my bitter exile.

JOC. Some god with fell intent is plaguing the race of Œdipus. Thus it all began; I broke God's law and bore a son, and in an evil hour married thy father and thou wert born. But why repeat these horrors? what Heaven sends we have to bear. I am afraid to ask thee

[1] Line 372 is rejected as spurious by Kirchhoff and Nauck; if it is retained ἄλγος must stand in apposition to the sentence somewhat awkwardly.

[2] Line 375 is not found in some copies, says the Schol. Usener goes further and rejects lines 375-8.

what I fain would, for fear of wounding thy feelings; yet I long to.

POL. Nay, question me, leave naught unsaid; for thy will, mother, is my pleasure too.

JOC. Well then, first I ask thee what I long to have answered. What means exile from one's country? is it a great evil?

POL. The greatest; harder to bear than tell.

JOC. What is it like? what is it galls the exile?

POL. One thing most of all; he cannot speak his mind.

JOC. This is a slave's lot thou describest, to refrain from uttering what one thinks.

POL. The follies of his rulers must he bear.

JOC. That too is bitter, to join in the folly of fools.

POL. Yet to gain our ends we must submit against our nature.

JOC. Hope, they say, is the exile's food.

POL. Aye, hope that looks so fair; but she is ever in the future.

JOC. But doth not time expose her futility?

POL. She hath a certain winsome charm in misfortune.

JOC. Whence hadst thou means to live, ere thy marriage found it for thee?

POL. One while I had enough for the day, and then maybe I had it not.

JOC. Did not thy father's friends and whilom guests assist thee?

POL. Seek to be prosperous; once let fortune lour, and the aid supplied by friends is naught.

JOC. Did not thy noble breeding exalt thy horn for thee?

POL. Poverty is a curse; breeding would not find me food.

JOC. Man's dearest treasure then, it seems, is his country.

POL. No words of thine could tell how dear.

Joc. How was it thou didst go to Argos? what was thy scheme?

Pol. I know not; the deity summoned me thither in accordance with my destiny.

Joc. He doubtless had some wise design; but how didst thou win thy wife?[1]

Pol. Loxias had given Adrastus an oracle.

Joc. What was it? what meanest thou? I cannot guess.

Pol. That he should wed his daughters to a boar and a lion.

Joc. What hadst thou, my son, to do with the name of beasts?

Pol. It was night when I reached the porch of Adrastus.

Joc. In search of a resting-place, or wandering thither in thy exile?

Pol. Yes, I wandered thither; and so did another like me.

Joc. Who was he? he too it seems was in evil plight.

Pol. Tydeus, son of Œneus, was his name.

Joc. But why did Adrastus liken you to wild beasts?

Pol. Because we came to blows about our bed.

Joc. Was it then that the son of Talaus understood the oracle?

Pol. Yes, and he gave to us his daughters twain.

Joc. Art thou blest or curst in thy marriage?

Pol. As yet I have no fault to find with it.

Joc. How didst thou persuade an army to follow thee hither?

Pol. To me and to Tydeus who is my kinsman by marriage,[2] Adrastus sware an oath, even to the husbands of his daughters twain, that he would restore us both to our country, me first. So many a chief from Argos and Mycenæ has joined me, doing me a bitter though needful service, for 'tis against

[1] Lines 413-4 were thus transposed before line 409 by Jacobs.

[2] Line 428 is rejected by some editors on the authority of Porson.

my own city I am marching. Now I call heaven to witness, that it is not willingly I have raised my arm against parents whom I love full well. But to thee, mother, it belongs to dissolve this unhappy feud, and, by reconciling brothers in love, to end my troubles and thine and this whole city's. 'Tis an old-world maxim, but I will cite it for all that: "Men set most store by wealth, and of all things in this world it hath the greatest power." This am I come to secure at the head of my countless host; for good birth is naught if poverty go with it.

CHO. Lo! Eteocles comes hither to discuss the truce. Thine the task, O mother Jocasta, to speak such words as may reconcile thy sons.

ETE. Mother, I am here; but it was only to pleasure thee I came. What am I to do? Let some one begin the conference;[1] for I stopped marshalling the citizens in double lines around the walls,[2] that I might hear thy arbitration between us; for it is under this truce that thou hast persuaded me to admit this fellow within the walls.

JOC. Stay a moment; haste never carries justice with it; but slow deliberation oft attains a wise result. Restrain the fierceness of thy look, that panting rage; for this is not the Gorgon's severed head but thy own brother whom thou seest here. Thou too, Polynices, turn and face thy brother; for if thou and he stand face to face, thou wilt adopt a kindlier tone and lend a readier ear to him. I fain would give you both one piece of wholesome counsel; when a man that is angered with his friend confronts him face to face, he ought only to keep in view the object of his coming, forgetting all previous quarrels. Polynices my son, speak

[1] Nauck rejects line 447.

[2] A corrupt passage, which, as it stands, is quite unintelligible. Kirchhoff's κεἰς for καὶ gives a possible though improbable meaning, which is as much as can be said for any of the numerous proposed emendations.

first, for thou art come at the head of a Danaid host, alleging wrongful treatment; and may some god judge betwixt us and reconcile the trouble.

POL. The words of truth are simple, and justice needs no subtle interpretations, for it hath a fitness in itself; but the words of injustice, being rotten in themselves, require clever treatment. I provided for his interests and mine in our father's palace, being anxious to avoid the curse which Œdipus once uttered against us [of my own free-will I left the land],[1] allowing him to rule our country for one full year, on condition that I should then take the sceptre in turn, instead of plunging into deadly enmity and thereby doing others hurt or suffering it myself, as is now the case.[2] But he, after consenting to this and calling the gods to witness his oath, has performed none of his promises, but is still keeping the sovereignty in his own hands together with my[3] share of our heritage. Even now am I ready to take my own and dismiss my army from this land, receiving my house in turn to dwell therein, and once more restore it to him for a like period instead of ravaging our country and planting scaling-ladders against the towers, as I shall attempt to do if I do not get my rights. Wherefore I call the gods to witness that spite of my just dealing in everything I am being unjustly robbed of my country by most godless fraud. Here, mother, have I stated the several points on their own merits, without collecting words to fence them in, but urging a fair case, I think, alike in the judgment of skilled or simple folk.

CHO. To me at least, albeit I was not born and bred in Hellas, thy words seem full of sense.

ETE. If all were unanimous in their ideas of honour and wisdom, there would have been no strife to make men dis-

[1] Paley points out that this line is spurious.
[2] Line 480 is regarded by Nauck as spurious.
[3] Reading ἐμὸν with Porson.

agree; but, as it is, fairness and equality have no existence in this world beyond the name; there is really no such thing. For instance, mother, I will tell thee this without any concealment; I would ascend to the rising of the stars and the sun[1] or dive beneath the earth, were I able so to do, to win a monarch's power, the chief of things divine. Therefore, mother, I will never yield this blessing to another, but keep it for myself; for it were a coward's act to lose the greater and to win the less. Besides, I blush to think that he should gain his object by coming with arms in his hand and ravaging the land; for this were foul disgrace to glorious Thebes, if I should yield my sceptre up to him for fear of Argive might. He ought not, mother, to have attempted reconcilement by armed force, for words compass everything that even the sword of an enemy might effect. Still, if on any other terms he cares to dwell here, he may; but the sceptre will I never willingly let go. Shall I become his slave, when I can be his master? Never! Wherefore come fire, come sword! harness your steeds, fill the plains with chariots, for I will not forego my throne for him. For if we must do wrong, to do so for a kingdom were the fairest cause, but in all else virtue should be our aim.

CHO. Fair words are only called for when the deeds they crown are fair; otherwise they lose their charm and offend justice.

JOC. Eteocles, my child, it is not all evil that attends old age; sometimes its experience can offer sager counsel than can youth. Oh! why, my son, art thou so set upon ambition, that worst of deities? Forbear; that goddess knows not justice; many are the homes and cities once prosperous that she hath entered and left after the ruin of her votaries; she it is thou madly followest. Better far, my son, prize equality that ever linketh friend to friend, city

[1] The correction suggested by Paley and Nauck, ἡλίου τ' ἐς ἀνταλάς, is here followed.

to city, and allies to each other; for equality is man's natural law; but the less is always in opposition to the greater, ushering in the dayspring of dislike. For it is equality that hath set up for man measures and divisions of weights and hath distinguished numbers; night's sightless orb, and radiant sun proceed upon their yearly course on equal terms, and neither of them is envious when it has to yield. Though sun and gloom then both are servants in man's interests, wilt not thou be content with thy fair share of thy heritage [and give the same to him? if not, why where is justice?][1] Why prize beyond its worth the monarch's power, injustice in prosperity? why think so much of the admiring glances turned on rank? Nay, 'tis vanity. Or wouldst thou by heaping riches in thy halls, heap up toil therewith? what advantage is it? 'tis but a name; for the wise find that enough which suffices for their wants. Man indeed hath no possessions of his own; we do but hold a stewardship of the gods' property; and when they will, they take it back again. [Riches make no settled home, but are as transient as the day.][2] Come, suppose I put before thee two alternatives, whether thou wilt rule or save thy city? Wilt thou say "Rule"?

Again, if Polynices win the day and his Argive warriors rout the ranks of Thebes, thou wilt see this city conquered and many a captive maid brutally dishonoured[3] by the foe; [so will that wealth thou art so bent on getting become a grievous bane to Thebes; but still ambition fills thee.][4] This I say to thee; and this to thee, Polynices; Adrastus hath conferred a foolish favour on thee; and thou too hast shown

[1] Paley regards this line as unquestionably spurious. For *ἀπονεῖμαι* Porson gives *ἀπονεμεῖς*, but no emendation makes it satisfactory.

[2] Most editors, after Valckenaer, regard this line as interpolated.

[3] *παρθουμένας*, but there is a var. lect. of some authority, *λελῃσμένας*.

[4] Lines 566-7 are rejected by Dindorf and Paley, though defended by Hermann and Klotz.

little sense in coming to lay thy city waste. Suppose thou conquer this land, (which Heaven forefend!) tell me, I conjure thee, how wilt thou rear a trophy to Zeus? how wilt thou begin the sacrifice after thy country's conquest or inscribe the spoils at the streams of Inachus with,—"Polynices gave Thebes to the flames and dedicated these shields to the gods?" Oh! never, my son, be it thine to win such fame from Hellas! If, on the other hand, thou art worsted and thy brother's cause prevail,[1] how shalt thou return to Argos, leaving countless dead behind? Some one will be sure to say, "Out on thee! Adrastus, for the evil bridegroom thou hast brought unto thy house; thanks to one maid's marriage, ruin is come on us."

Towards two evils, my son, art thou hasting,—loss of influence there and ruin in the midst of thy efforts here. Oh! my children, lay aside your violence; two men's follies, once they meet, result in very deadly mischief.

CHO. O heaven, avert these troubles and reconcile the sons of Œdipus in some way!

ETE. Mother, the season for parley is past; the time we still delay is idle waste; thy good wishes are of no avail for we shall never be reconciled except upon the terms already named, namely, that I should keep the sceptre and be king of this land: wherefore cease these tedious warnings and let me be. [*Turning to* POLYNICES.] And as for thee, outside the walls, or die!

POL. Who will slay me? who is so invulnerable as to plunge his sword in my body without reaping the self-same fate?

ETE. Thou art near him, aye, very near; dost see my arm?

POL. I see it; but wealth is cowardly, a craven too fond of life.

[1] Reading *ὑπερδράμῃ* with Canter.

ETE. Was it then to meet a dastard thou camest with all that host to war?

POL. In a general caution is better than foolhardiness.

ETE. Relying on the truce, which saves thy life, thou turnest boaster.

POL. Once more I ask thee to restore my sceptre and share in the kingdom.

ETE. I have naught to restore; 'tis my own house, and I will dwell therein.

POL. What! and keep more than thy share?

ETE. Yes, I will. Begone!

POL. O altars of my fathers' gods!—

ETE. Which thou art here to raze.

POL. Hear me.

ETE. Who would hear thee after thou hast marched against thy fatherland?

POL. O temples of those gods that ride on snow-white steeds![1]

ETE. They hate thee.

POL. I am being driven from my country.

ETE. Because thou camest to drive others thence.

POL. Unjustly, O ye gods!

ETE. Call on the gods at Mycenæ, not here.

POL. Thou hast outraged right—

ETE. But I have not like thee become my country's foe.

POL. By driving me forth without my portion.

ETE. I will slay thee to boot.

POL. O father, dost thou hear what I am suffering?

ETE. Yea, and he hears what thou art doing.

POL. Thou too, mother mine?

ETE. Thou hast no right to mention thy mother.

POL. O my city!

ETE. Get thee to Argos, and invoke the waters of Lerna.

[1] Amphion and Zethus, the Theban Dioscuri.

POL. I will; trouble not thyself; all thanks to thee though, mother mine.

ETE. Forth from the land!

POL. I go, yet grant me to behold my father.

ETE. Thou shalt not have thy wish.

POL. At least then my tender sisters.

ETE. No! them too thou shalt never see.

POL. Ah, sisters mine!

ETE. Why dost thou, their bitterest foe, call on them?

POL. Mother dear, to thee at least farewell!

JOC. A joyous faring mine in sooth, my son!

POL. Thy son no more!

JOC. Born to sorrow, endless sorrow, I!

POL. 'Tis because my brother treats me despitefully.

ETE. I am treated just the same.

POL. Where wilt thou be stationed before the towers?

ETE. Why ask me this?

POL. I will array myself against thee for thy death.

ETE. I too have the same desire.

JOC. Woe is me! what will ye do, my sons?

POL. The event will show.

JOC. Oh, fly your father's curse! [*Exit* JOCASTA.

ETE. Destruction seize our whole house!

POL. Soon shall my sword be busy, plunged in gore. But I call my native land and heaven too to witness, with what contumely and bitter treatment I am being driven forth, as though I were a slave, not a son of Œdipus as much as he. If aught happen to thee, my city, blame him, not me; for I came not willingly, and all unwillingly am I driven hence.[1] Farewell, king Phœbus, lord of highways; farewell palace and comrades; farewell ye statues of the gods, at which men offer sheep; for I know not if I shall ever address you again, though hope is still awake,

[1] Valckenaer and Dindorf reject this line.

which makes me confident that with heaven's help I shall slay this fellow and rule my native Thebes.

[*Exit* POLYNICES.

ETE. Forth from the land! 'twas a true name our father gave thee, when, prompted by some god, he called thee Polynices, a name denoting strife. [*Exit* ETEOCLES.

CHO. To this land came Cadmus of Tyre, at whose feet an unyoked heifer threw itself down, giving effect to an oracle on the spot where the god's response bade him take up his abode in Aonia's rich corn-lands,[1] where gushing Dirce's fair rivers of water pour o'er verdant fruitful fields; here was born[2] the Bromian god by her whom Zeus made a mother, round whom the ivy twined its wreaths while he was yet a babe, swathing him amid the covert of its green foliage as a child of happy destiny, to be a theme for Bacchic revelry among the maids and wives inspired in Thebes.

There lay Ares' murderous dragon, a savage warder, watching with roving eye the watered glens and quickening streams; him did Cadmus slay with a jagged stone, when he came thither to draw him lustral water, smiting[3] that fell head with a blow of his death-dealing arm; but by the counsel of Pallas, motherless goddess, he cast the teeth upon the earth into deep furrows, whence sprang to sight a mail-clad host above the surface of the soil; but grim slaughter once again united them to the earth they loved, bedewing with blood the ground that had disclosed them to the sun-lit breath of heaven.

Thee too, Epaphus, child of Zeus, sprung from Io our ancestress, I call on in my foreign tongue; all hail to thee! hear my prayer uttered in accents strange, and visit this

[1] Reading *πυροφόρ' Ἀόνων ἔχρη* with Kirchhoff, but the passage is too corrupt for any certain emendation.

[2] *τίκτετο*, the reading of the MSS., can hardly be right in this connection but no satisfactory correction is offered.

[3] *δικὼν*, probably corrupt as it recurs immediately below.

land; 'twas in thy honour thy descendants settled her those goddesses of twofold name, Persephone and Demeter or Earth the queen of all, that feedeth every won it for themselves;[1] send to the help of this land torch-bearing queens; for to gods all things are easy.

ETE. (*to an attendant.*) Go, fetch Creon son of Men the brother of Jocasta my mother; tell him I fain confer with him on matters affecting our public and weal, before we set out to battle and the arraying host. But lo! he comes and saves thee the trou going; I see him on his way to my palace.

CRE. To and fro have I been, king Eteocles, desire to see thee, and have gone all round the g sentinels of Thebes in quest of thee.

ETE. Why, and I was anxious to see thee, Cre I found the terms of peace far from satisfactory, came to confer with Polynices.

CRE. I hear that he has wider aims than Thebes, on his alliance with the daughter of Adrastus army. Well, we must leave this dependent on th meantime I am come to tell thee our chief obstacle.

ETE. What is that? I do not understand wh sayest.

CRE. There is come one that was captured by the

ETE. What news does he bring from their camp?

CRE. He says the Argive army intend at once t ring of troops round [the city of Thebes, about its

ETE. In that case the city of Cadmus must lea troops.

[1] *i.e.*, Persephone and Demeter who is one with the earth, est their worship in Thebes jointly though under distinct nam passage is in some way corrupt, the metre being faulty; perhaps δέ should be omitted and κτήσαντο read.

[2] Line 710 is rejected by Dindorf as spurious. Kirchhoff by Paley, inclose in brackets Καδμείων πόλιν . . . . στρατόν.

CRE. Whither? art thou so young that thine eyes see not what they should?

ETE. Across yon trenches for immediate action.

CRE. Our Theban forces are small, while theirs are numberless.

ETE. I well know they are reputed brave.

CRE. No mean repute have those Argives among Hellenes.

ETE. Never fear! I will soon fill the plain with their dead.

CRE. I could wish it so; but I see great difficulties in this.

ETE. Trust me, I will not keep my host within the walls.

CRE. Still victory is entirely a matter of good counsel.

ETE. Art anxious then that I should have recourse to any other scheme?

CRE. Aye to every scheme, before running the risk once for all.

ETE. Suppose we fall on them by night from ambuscade?

CRE. Good! provided in the event of defeat thou canst secure thy return hither.

ETE. Night equalizes risks, though it rather favours daring.

CRE. The darkness of night is a terrible time to suffer disaster.

ETE. Well, shall I fall upon them as they sit at meat?

CRE. That might cause a scare, but victory is what we want.

ETE. Dirce's ford is deep enough to prevent their retreat.

CRE. No plan so good as to keep well guarded.

ETE. What if our cavalry make a sortie against the host of Argos?

CRE. Their troops too[1] are fenced all round with chariots.

ETE. What then can I do? am I to surrender the city to the foe?

[1] For κἀκεῖ, Nauck proposes καλῶς. Herwerden κἄρ' εἶ.

CRE. Nay, nay! but of thy wisdom form some plan.

ETE. Pray, what scheme is wiser than mine?

CRE. They have seven chiefs, I hear,

ETE. What is their appointed task? their might can be but feeble.

CRE. To lead the several companies and storm our seven gates.

ETE. What are we to do? I will not wait till every chance is gone.

CRE. Choose seven chiefs thyself to set against them at the gates.

ETE. To lead our companies, or to fight single-handed?

CRE. Choose our very bravest men to lead the troops.

ETE. I understand; to repel attempts at scaling our walls.

CRE. With others to share the command, for one man sees not everything.

ETE. Selecting them for courage or thoughtful prudence?

CRE. For both; for one is naught without the other.

ETE. It shall be done; I will away to our seven towers and post captains at the gates, as thou advisest, pitting them man for man against the foe. To tell thee each one's name were grievous waste of time, when the foe is camped beneath our very walls. But I will go, that my hands may no longer hang idle. May I meet my brother face to face, and encounter him hand to hand, [e'en to the death, for coming to waste my country!][1] But if I suffer any mischance, thou must see to the marriage 'twixt Antigone my sister and Hæmon, thy son; and now, as I go forth to battle, I ratify their previous espousal. Thou art my mother's brother, so why need I say more? take care of her, as she deserves, both for thy own sake and mine. As for my sire he hath been guilty of folly against himself in putting out his eyes; small praise have I for him; by his curses maybe he will

[1] This line is rejected by Paley after Valckenaer; he also thinks it possible that the three preceding lines are interpolated.

slay us too. One thing only have we still to do, to ask Teiresias, the seer, if he has aught to tell of heaven's will. Thy son Menœceus, who bears thy father's name, will I send to fetch Teiresias hither, Creon; for with thee he will readily converse, though I have ere now so scorned his art prophetic to his face, that he has reasons to reproach me. This commandment, Creon, I lay upon the city and thee; should my cause prevail, never give Polynices' corpse a grave in Theban soil, and if so be some friend should bury him, let death reward the man. [Thus far to thee; and to my servants thus,][1] bring forth my arms and coat of mail, that I may start at once for the appointed combat, with right to lead to victory. To save our city we will pray to Caution, the best goddess to serve our end. [*Exit* ETEOCLES.

CHO. O Ares, god of toil and trouble! why, why art thou possessed by a love of blood and death, out of harmony with the festivals of Bromius? 'Tis for no crowns of dancers fair that thou dost toss thy youthful[2] curls to the breeze, singing the while to the lute's soft breath a strain to charm the dancers' feet; but with warriors[3] clad in mail thou dost lead thy sombre revelry, breathing into Argive breasts a lust for Theban blood; with no wild waving of the thrysus, clad in fawnskin thou[4] dancest, but with chariots and bitted steeds wheelest thy charger strong of hoof. O'er the waters of Ismenus in wild career thou art urging thy horses, inspiring[5] Argive breasts with hate of the earth-born

[1] Kirchhoff regards this line as an interpolation from l. 568.

[2] Reading *νεάνιδος ὥρας*.

[3] *σὺν ὁπλοφόροις . . . . αἵματι Θήβας*; Badham's conjecture is ingenious, *ὁπλοφόρῳ . . . . ᾄσματι*, *i.e.*, "inspiring the Argives by thy war-song to attack Thebes." The passage is almost certainly corrupt, and the construction very difficult.

[4] Reading with Musgrave *οὐ πόδα θυρσομανῆ*, for the unintelligible reading of the MSS.

[5] These words seem to be corrupt, and apparently derived from l. 789.

race, arraying in brazen harness against these stone-built walls a host of warriors armed with shields.

Truly Strife is a goddess to fear, who devised these troubles for the princes of this land, for the much-enduring sons of Labdacus.

O Cithæron, apple of the eye of Artemis, holy vale of leaves, amid whose snows fully many a beast lies couched, would thou hadst never reared the child exposed to die, Œdipus the fruit of Jocasta's womb, when as a babe he was cast forth from his home, marked with a golden brooch;[1] and would the Sphinx, that winged maid, fell monster from the hills, had never come to curse our land with inharmonious strains; she that erst drew nigh our walls and snatched the sons of Cadmus away in her taloned feet to the pathless fields of light, a fiend sent by Hades from hell to plague the men of Thebes; once more unhappy strife is bursting out between the sons of Œdipus in city and home. For never can wrong be right, ... nor children of unnatural parentage come as a glory to the mother that bears them, but as a stain on the marriage of him who is father and brother at once.[2]

O earth, thou once didst bear,—so long ago I heard the story told by foreigners in my own home,—a race which sprang of the teeth of a snake with blood-red crest, that fed on beasts, to be the glory and reproach of Thebes.

In days gone by the sons of heaven came to the wedding of Harmonia, and the walls of Thebes arose to the sound of the lyre and her towers stood up as Amphion played, in the midst between the double streams of Dirce, that

[1] It would seem that his mother affixed some token to her babe, a common practice, cf. Ion, l. 22. Others refer the expression to the piercing of the feet of Œdipus, cf. Paley's note, *ad loc.*

[2] Reading *πατρὸς δὲ συναίμονος ἐς λέχος ἦλθον.* But the whole passage from l. 815 is almost hopelessly corrupt, as well as deficient in sense owing to the loss of a line.

watereth the green meadows fronting the Ismenus; and Io, our hornèd ancestress, was mother of the kings of Thebes; thus our city through an endless succession of divers blessings has set herself upon the highest pinnacle of martial glory.

TEI. (*led in by his daughter.*) Lead on, my daughter; for thou art as an eye to my blind feet, as certain as a star to mariners; lead my steps on to level ground; then go before, that we stumble not, for thy father has no strength; keep safe for me in thy maiden hand the auguries I took in the days I observed the flight and cries of birds seated in my holy prophet's chair. Tell me, young Menœceus, son of Creon, how much further toward the city is it ere I reach thy father? for my knees grow weary, and I can scarce keep up this hurried pace.

CRE. Take heart, Teiresias, for thou hast reached thy moorings and art near thy friends; take him by the hand, my child; for just as every carriage has to wait for outside help to steady it, so too hath the step of age[1]

TEI. Enough; I have arrived; why, Creon, dost thou summon me so urgently?

CRE. I have not forgotten that; but first collect thyself and regain breath, shaking off the fatigue of thy journey.

TEI. I am indeed[2] worn out, having arrived here only yesterday from the court of the Erechthidæ; for they too were at war, fighting with Eumolpus, in which contest I insured the victory of Cecrops' sons; and I received the golden crown, which thou seest me wearing, as firstfruits of the enemy's spoil.

CRE. I take thy crown of victory as an omen. We, as thou knowest, are exposed to the billows of an Argive war, and great is the struggle for Thebes. Eteocles, our king,

[1] The meaning seems to be that as those dismounting from a chariot need a helping hand quite as much as the aged ever do, the latter need feel no shame in asking it.

[2] γοῦν, the common reading, for which Paley prefers γυῖ'.

is already gone in full harness to meet Mycenæ's champions, and hath bidden me inquire of thee our best course to save the city.

TEI. For Eteocles I would have closed my lips and refrained from all response, but to thee I will speak, since 'tis thy wish to learn. This country, Creon, has been long afflicted, ever since Laius became a father in heaven's despite, [begetting hapless Œdipus to be his own mother's husband].[1] That bloody outrage on his eyes was planned by heaven as an ensample to Hellas; and the sons of Œdipus made a gross mistake in wishing to throw over it the veil of time, as if forsooth they could outrun the gods' decree; for by robbing their father of his due honour and allowing him no freedom, they exasperated the poor sufferer; so he, stung by suffering and disgrace as well, vented awful curses against them; and I, because I left nothing undone or unsaid to prevent this,[2] incurred the hatred of the sons of Œdipus. But death inflicted by each other's hands awaits them, Creon; and the many heaps of slain, some from Argive, some from Theban missiles, shall cause bitter lamentation in the land of Thebes. Alas! for thee, poor city, thou art being involved in their ruin, unless I can persuade one man. The best course was to prevent any child of Œdipus becoming either citizen or king in this land, on the ground that they were under a ban and would overthrow the city. But since evil has the mastery of good, there is still one other way of safety; but this it were unsafe for me to tell, and painful too for those whose high fortune it is to supply their city with the saving cure. Farewell! I will away; amongst the rest must I endure my doom, if need be; for what will become of me?

CRE. Stay here, old man.

[1] Line 869 is perhaps interpolated. Kirchhoff thinks that several verses have been lost before l. 870.

[2] Reading ἀγὼ τί ἐρῶν οὐ, ποῖα δ' οὐ.

TEI. Hold me not.

CRE. Abide, why dost thou seek to fly?

TEI. 'Tis thy fortune that flies thee, not I.

CRE. Tell me what can save Thebes and her citizens.

TEI. Though this be now thy wish, it will soon cease to be.

CRE. Not wish to save my country? how can that be?

TEI. Art thou still eager to be told?

CRE. Yea; for wherein should I show greater zeal?

TEI. Then straightway shalt thou hear my words prophetic. But first I would fain know for certain, where Menœceus is, who led me hither.

CRE. Here, not far away, but at thy side.

TEI. Let him retire far from my prophetic voice.

CRE. He is my own son and will preserve due silence.

TEI. Wilt thou then that I tell thee in his presence?

CRE. Yea, for he will rejoice to hear the means of safety.

TEI. Then hear the purport of my oracle, [the which if ye observe ye shall save the city of Cadmus].[1]

Thou must sacrifice Menœceus thy son here for thy country, since thine own lips demand the voice of fate.

CRE. What mean'st thou? what is this thou hast said, old man?

TEI. To that which is to be thou also must conform.

CRE. O the eternity of woe thy minute's tale proclaims!

TEI. Yes to thee, but to thy country great salvation.

CRE. I shut my ears; I never listened; to city now farewell!

TEI. Ha! the man is changed; he is drawing back.

CRE. Go in peace; it is not thy prophecy I need.

TEI. Is truth dead, because thou art curst with woe?

CRE. By thy knees and honoured locks I implore thee!

[1] Rejected by Kirchhoff.

TEI. Why implore me? thou art craving[1] a calamity hard to guard against.

CRE. Keep silence; tell not the city thy news.

TEI. Thou biddest me act unjustly; I will not hold my peace.

CRE. What wilt thou then do to me? slay my child?

TEI. That is for others to decide; I have but to speak.

CRE. Whence came this curse on me and my son?

TEI. Thou dost right to ask me and to test what I have said. In yonder lair, where the earth-born dragon kept watch and ward o'er Dirce's springs, must this youth be offered and shed his life-blood on the ground by reason of Ares' ancient grudge against Cadmus, who thus avenges the slaughter of his earth-born snake. If ye do this, ye shall win Ares as an ally; and if the earth receive crop for crop and human blood for blood, ye shall find her kind again, that erst to your sorrow reared from that dragon's seed a crop of warriors with golden casques; for needs must one sprung from the dragon's teeth be slain. Now thou art our only survivor of the seed of that sown race, whose lineage is pure alike on mother's and on father's side, thou and these thy sons. Hæmon's marriage debars him from being the victim, for he is no longer single; for even if he have not consummated his marriage, yet is he betrothed; but this tender youth, consecrated to the city's service, might by dying rescue his country; and bitter will he make the return of Adrastus and his Argives, flinging o'er their eyes death's dark pall, and will glorify Thebes. Choose thee one of these alternatives; either save the city or thy son.

Now hast thou all I have to say. Daughter, lead me

[1] *αἰτεῖ*, so the best MSS. Paley explains this as meaning "in asking me to keep silence you are really asking for the capture of Thebes, an evil difficult to guard against." This is very harsh; and it seems preferable to read *αἰνεῖ* with Hermann, "acquiesce in evils you cannot guard against," an emendation followed by Dindorf and Nauck.

ome. A fool, the man who practises the diviner's art; for f he should announce an adverse answer, he makes himself lisliked by those who seek to him; while, if from pity he leceives those who are consulting him, he sins against Heaven. Phœbus should have been man's only prophet, or he fears no man. [*Exit* TEIRESIAS.

CHO. Why so silent, Creon, why are thy lips hushed and lumb? I too am no less stricken with dismay.

CRE. Why, what could one say? 'Tis clear what my words must be. For I will never plunge myself so deeply into misfortune as to devote my son to death for the city; for love of children binds all men to life, and none would resign his own son to die. Let no man praise me into slaying[1] my children. I am ready to die myself—for I am ripe in years—to set my country free. But thou, my son, ere the whole city learn this, up and fly with all haste away from this land, regardless of these prophets' unbridled utterances; for he will go to the seven gates and the captains there and tell all this to our governors and leaders; now if we can forestal him, thou mayst be saved, but if thou art too late, 'tis all over with us and thou wilt die.

MEN. Whither can I fly? to what city? to which of our guest-friends?

CRE. Fly where thou wilt be furthest removed from this land.

MEN. 'Tis for thee to name a place, for me to carry out thy bidding.

CRE. After passing Delphi—

MEN. Whither must I go, father?

CRE. To Ætolia.

MEN. Whither thence?

CRE. To the land of Thesprotia.

[1] Reading κτείνειν, a conjecture preferred by Paley and Nauck to MSS. κτείνων, which would mean "let no man praise me when all the ime he is trying to kill my children."

MEN. To Dodona's hallowed threshold?

CRE. Thou followest me.

MEN. What protection shall I find me there?

CRE. The god will send thee on thy way.

MEN. How shall I find the means?

CRE. I will supply thee with money.

MEN. A good plan of thine, father. So go; for I will to thy sister, Jocasta, at whose breast I was suckled as a babe when reft of my mother and left a lonely orphan, to give her kindly greeting and then will I seek my safety. Come, come! be going, that there be no hindrance on thy part.

[*Exit* CREON.

How cleverly, ladies, I banished my father's fears by crafty words to gain my end; for he is trying to convey me hence, depriving the city of its chance and surrendering me to cowardice. Though an old man may be pardoned, yet in my case there is no excuse for betraying the country that gave me birth. So I will go and save the city, be assured thereof, and give my life up for this land.[1] For this were shame, that they whom no oracles bind and who have not come under Fate's iron law, should stand there, shoulder to shoulder, with never a fear of death, and fight for their country before her towers, while I escape the kingdom like a coward, a traitor to my father and brother and city; and wheresoe'er I live, I shall appear a dastard. Nay, by Zeus and all his stars, by Ares, god of blood, who 'stablished the warrior-crop that sprung one day from earth as princes of this land, that shall not be! but go I will, and standing on the topmost battlements, will deal my own death-blow over the dragon's deep dark den, the spot the seer described, and will set my country free. I have spoken. Now I go to make the city a present of my life, no mean offering, to rid this kingdom of its affliction. For if each were to take and

[1] Lines 997-8 are bracketed by Nauck as spurious.

expend all the good within his power, contributing it to his country's weal, our states would experience fewer troubles and would for the future prosper. [*Exit* MENŒCEUS.

CHO. Thou cam'st, O winged fiend, spawn of earth and hellish viper-brood, to prey upon the sons of Cadmus, rife with death and fraught with sorrow, half a monster, half a maid, a murderous prodigy, with roving wings and ravening claws, that in days gone by didst catch up youthful victims from the haunts of Dirce, with discordant note, bringing a deadly curse, a woe of bloodshed to our native land. A murderous god he was who brought all this to pass. In every house was heard a cry of mothers wailing and of wailing maids, lamentation and the voice of weeping, as each took up the chant of death from street to street in turn. Loud rang the mourners' wail, and one great cry went up, whene'er that winged maiden bore some victim out of sight from the city. At last came Œdipus, the man of sorrow, on his mission from Delphi to this land of Thebes, a joy to them then but afterwards a cause of grief; for, when he had read the riddle triumphantly, he formed with his mother an unhallowed union, woe to him! polluting the city; and by his curses, luckless wight, he plunged his sons into a guilty strife, causing them to wade through seas of blood.

All reverence do we feel for him, who is gone to his death in his country's cause, bequeathing to Creon a legacy of tears, but destined to crown with victory our seven fenced towers. May our motherhood be blessed with such noble sons, O Pallas, kindly queen, who with well-aimed stone didst spill the serpent's blood, rousing Cadmus as thou didst to brood upon the task, whereof the issue was a demon's curse that swooped upon this land and harried it.

MES. Ho there! who is at the palace-gates? Open the door, summon Jocasta forth. Ho there! once again I call; spite of this long delay come forth; hearken, noble wife of Œdipus; cease thy lamentation and thy tears of woe.

Joc. Surely thou art not[1] come, my friend, with the sad news of Eteocles' death, beside whose shield thou hast ever marched, warding from him the foeman's darts? [What tidings art thou here to bring me?][2] Is my son alive or dead? Declare that to me.

Mes. To rid thee of thy fear at once, he lives; that terror banish.

Joc. Next, how is it with the seven towers that wall us in?

Mes. They stand unshattered still; the city is not yet a prey.

Joc. Have they been in jeopardy of the Argive spear?

Mes. Aye, on the very brink; but our Theban warriors proved too strong for Mycenæ's might.

Joc. One thing tell me, I implore; knowest thou aught of Polynices, is he yet alive? for this too I long to learn.

Mes. As yet thy sons are living, the pair of them.

Joc. God bless thee! How did you succeed in beating off from our gates the Argive hosts, when thus beleaguered? Tell me, that I may go within and cheer the old blind man, since our city is still safe.

Mes. After Creon's son, who gave up life for country, had taken his stand on the turret's top and plunged a sword dark-hilted through his throat to save this land, thy son told off seven companies with their captains to the seven gates to keep watch on the Argive warriors, and stationed cavalry[3] to cover cavalry, and infantry to support infantry, that assistance might be close at hand for any weak point in the walls. Then from our lofty towers we saw the Argive host with their white shields leaving Teumessus, and, when near the trench, they charged up to our Theban city at the double.[4] In one loud burst from their ranks and from our battlements rang

[1] Paley and Kirchhoff read *οὔ που*.

[2] Rejected by Kirchhoff as spurious.

[3] Reading *ἐφέδρους θ' . . . . ἔταξ'*.

[4] This line is scarcely intelligible, and perhaps spurious.

out the battle-cry and trumpet-call. First to the Neistian gate, Parthenopæus, son of the huntress maid, led a company bristling with serried shields, himself with his own peculiar badge in the centre of his targe, Atalanta slaying the Ætolian boar with an arrow shot from far. To the gates of Prœtus came the prophet Amphiaraus, bringing the victims on a chariot; no vaunting blazon he carried, but weapons chastely plain. Next prince Hippomedon came marching to the Ogygian port with this device upon his boss, Argus the all-seeing with his spangled eyes upon the watch [whereof some open with the rising stars, while others he closes when they set, as one could see after he was slain].[1] At the Homoloian gates Tydeus was posting himself, a lion's skin with shaggy mane upon his buckler, while in his right hand he bore a torch, like Titan Prometheus, to fire the town. Thy own son Polynices led the battle 'gainst the Fountain gate; upon his shield for blazon were the steeds of Potniæ galloping at frantic speed, revolving by some clever contrivance on pivots inside the buckler close to the handle, so as to appear distraught. At Electra's gate famed Capaneus brought up his company, bold as Ares for the fray; this device his buckler bore upon its iron back, an earth-born giant carrying on his shoulders a whole city which he had wrenched from its base, a hint to us of the fate in store for Thebes. Adrastus was stationed at the seventh gate; a hundred vipers filled his shield with graven work, as he bore on his left arm that proud Argive badge, the hydra, and serpents were carrying off in their jaws the sons of Thebes from within their very walls. Now I was enabled to see each of them, as I carried the watch-word along the line to the leaders of our companies. To begin with, we fought with bows and thonged javelins, with slings that shoot from far

[1] Lines 1116-18 were first condemned by Valckenaer; as they stand they are next to unintelligible and almost certainly spurious, in spite of the defence made for them by Klotz.

and showers of crashing stones; and as we were conquering, Tydeus and thy son on a sudden cried aloud, "Ye sons of Argos, before being riddled by their fire, why delay to fall upon the gates with might and main, the whole of you, light-armed and horse and charioteers?" No loitering then, soon as they heard that call; and many a warrior fell with bloody crown, and not a few of us thou couldst have seen thrown to the earth like tumblers before the walls, after they had given up the ghost,[1] bedewing the thirsty ground with streams of gore. Then Atalanta's son, who was not an Argive but an Arcadian, hurling himself like a hurricane at the gates, called for fire and picks to raze the town; but Periclymenus, son of the ocean-god, stayed his wild career, heaving on his head a waggon-load of stone, even the coping torn from the battlements; and it shattered his head with the hair and crashed through the sutures of the skull, dabbling with blood his cheek just showing manhood's flush; and never shall he go back alive to his fair archer-mother, the maid of Mænalus.[2]

Thy son then, seeing these gates secure, went on to the next, and I with him. There I saw Tydeus and his serried ranks of targeteers hurling their Ætolian spears into the opening at the top of the turrets, with such good aim that our men fled and left the beetling battlements; but thy son rallied them once more, as a huntsman cheers his hounds, and made them man the towers again. And then away we hastened to other gates, after stopping the panic there. As for the madness of Capaneus, how am I to describe it? There was he, carrying with him a long scaling-ladder and loudly boasting that even the awful lightning of Zeus would not stay him from giving the city to utter destruction; and even as he spoke, he crept up beneath the hail of stones, gathered under the shelter of his shield,

[1] Reading ἐκπεπνευκότας.

[2] A mountain in Arcadia.

mounting from rung to rung on the smooth ladder; but, just as he was scaling the parapet of the wall, Zeus smote him with a thunderbolt; loud the earth re-echoed, and fear seized every heart; for his limbs were hurled from the ladder far apart as from a sling, his head toward the sky, his blood toward earth,[1] while his legs and arms went spinning round like Ixion's wheel, till his charred corpse fell to the ground. But when Adrastus saw that Zeus was leagued against his army, he drew the Argive troops outside the trench and halted them. Meantime our horse,[2] marking the lucky omen of Zeus, began driving forth their chariots, and our men-at-arms charged into the thick of the Argives, and everything combined to their discomfiture; men were falling and hurled headlong from chariots, wheels flew off, axles crashed together, while ever higher grew the heaps of slain; so for to-day at least have we prevented the destruction of our country's bulwarks; but whether fortune will hereafter smile upon this land, that rests with Heaven; [for, even as it is, it owes its safety to some deity.][3]

CHO. Victory is fair; and if the gods are growing kinder, it would be well with me.

JOC. Heaven and fortune smile; for my sons are yet alive and my country hath escaped ruin. But Creon seems to have reaped the bitter fruit of my marriage with Œdipus, by losing his son to his sorrow, a piece of luck for Thebes, but bitter grief to him. Prithee to thy tale again and say what my two sons intend to do next.

MES. Forbear to question further; all is well with thee so far.

JOC. Thy words but rouse my suspicions; I cannot leave it thus.

[1] Lines 1183-85 are regarded by Nauck as spurious.

[2] Paley's reading ἱππῆς, ὁπλῖταί τ' is followed; Nauck's ἱππῆς ὁπλῖταί· is plausible.

[3] This line is not found in many of the MSS.

MES. Hast thou any further wish than thy sons' safety?

JOC. Yea, I would learn whether in the sequel I am also blest.

MES. Let me go; thy son is left without his squire.

JOC. There is some evil thou art hiding, veiling it in darkness.

MES. Maybe; I would not add ill news to the good thou hast heard.

JOC. Thou must, unless thou take wings and fly away.

MES. Ah! why didst thou not let me go after announcing my good news, instead of forcing me to disclose evil? Those two sons of thine are resolved on deeds of shameful recklessness, a single combat apart from the host, [addressing to Argives and Thebans alike words I would they had never uttered. Eteocles, taking his stand on a lofty tower, after ordering silence to be proclaimed to the army, began on this wise, "Ye captains of Hellas, chieftains of Argos here assembled, and ye folk of Cadmus, barter not your lives for Polynices or for me! For I myself excuse you from this risk, and will engage my brother in single combat; and if I slay him, I will possess my palace without rival, but if I am worsted I will bequeath the city to him.[1] Ye men of Argos, give up the struggle and return to your land, nor lose your lives here; of the earth-sown folk as well there are dead enough in those already slain."

So he; then thy son Polynices rushed from the array and assented to his proposal; and all the Argives and the people of Cadmus shouted their approval, as though they deemed it just. On these terms the armies made a truce, and in the space betwixt them took an oath of each other for their leaders to abide by. Forthwith in brazen mail those two sons of aged Œdipus were casing themselves; and lords of Thebes with friendly care equipped the captain of

[1] Reading πόλιν.

this land, while Argive chieftains armed the other. There they stood in dazzling sheen, neither blenching, all eagerness to hurl their lances each at the other. Then came their friends to their side, first one, then another, with words of encouragement, to wit;

"Polynices, it rests with thee to set up an image of Zeus as a trophy, and crown Argos with fair renown."

Others hailed Eteocles; "Now art thou fighting for thy city; now, if victorious, thou hast the sceptre in thy power."

So spake they, cheering them to the fray.

Meantime the seers were sacrificing sheep and noting the tongues and forks of fire, the damp reek which is a bad omen, and the tapering flame, which gives decisions on two points, being both a sign of victory and defeat.][1] But, if thou hast any power or subtle speech or charmèd spell, go, stay thy children from this fell affray, for great is the risk they run. [The issue thereof will be grievous sorrow for thee, if to-day thou art reft of both thy sons.][2] [*Exit* MESSENGER.

JOC. Antigone, my daughter, come forth before the palace; this heaven-sent crisis is no time for thee to be dancing or amusing thyself with girlish pursuits. But thou and thy mother must prevent two gallant youths, thy own brothers, from plunging into death and falling by each other's hand.

ANT. Mother mine, what new terror art thou proclaiming to thy dear ones before the palace?

JOC. Daughter, thy brothers are in danger of their life.

ANT. What mean'st thou?

JOC. They have resolved on single combat.

ANT. O horror! what hast thou to tell, mother?

[1] Paley is of opinion that the whole passage from l. 1221 to l. 1258 is an interpolation by a later hand, and there is much in it that is not in the style of Euripides, and so too in the dialogue following.

[2] Lines 1262-3 are rejected by Valckenaer and subsequent editors.

Joc. No welcome news; follow me.

ANT. Whither away from my maiden-bower?

Joc. To the army.

ANT. I cannot face the crowd.

Joc. Coyness is not thy cue now.

ANT. But what can I do?

Joc. Thou shalt end thy brothers' strife.

ANT. By what means, mother mine?

Joc. By falling at their knees with me.

ANT. Lead on till we are 'twixt the armies; no time for lingering now.

Joc. Haste, my daughter, haste! For, if I can forestal the onset of my sons, I may yet live; but if they be dead, I will lay me down and die with them.

[*Exeunt* JOCASTA *and* ANTIGONE.

CHO. Ah me! my bosom thrills with terror; and through my flesh there passed a throb of pity for the hapless mother. Which of her two sons will send the other to a bloody grave? ah, woe is me! O Zeus, O earth, alas! brother severing brother's throat and robbing him of life, cleaving through his shield to spill his blood? Ah me! ah me! which of them will claim my dirge of death? Woe unto thee, thou land of Thebes! two savage beasts, two murderous souls, with brandished spears will soon be draining each his fallen foeman's gore. Woe is them, that they ever thought of single combat! in foreign accent will I chant a dirge of tears and wailing in mourning for the dead. Close to murder stands their fortune;[1] the coming day will decide it.[2] Fatal, ah! fatal will this slaughter be, because of the avenging fiends.

But hist! I see Creon on his way hither to the palace with brow o'ercast; I will check my present lamentations.

[1] Reading σχεδὸν τύχα πέλας φόνου.

[2] The Schol. explains this differently, "to-day will decide the event," but φάος alone can scarcely mean "this day."

CRE. Ah me! what shall I do? Am I to mourn with bitter tears myself or my city, round which is settling a swarm thick enough to send us to Acheron? My own son hath died for his country, bringing glory to his name but grievous woe to me. His body I rescued but now from the dragon's rocky lair and sadly carried the self-slain victim hither in my arms; and my house is filled with weeping; but now I come to fetch my sister Jocasta, age seeking age, that she may bathe my child's corpse and lay it out. For the living must reverence the nether god by paying honour to the dead.

CHO. Thy sister, Creon, hath gone forth and her daughter Antigone went with her.

CRE. Whither went she? and wherefore? tell me.

CHO. She heard that her sons were about to engage in single combat for the royal house.

CRE. What is this? I was paying the last honours to my dead son, and so am behindhand in learning this fresh sorrow.

CHO. 'Tis some time, Creon, since thy sister's departure, and I expect the struggle for life and death is already decided by the sons of Œdipus.

CRE. Alas! I see an omen there, the gloomy look and clouded brow of yonder messenger coming to tell us the whole matter.

MES. Ah, woe is me! what language can I find to tell my tale?

CRE. Our fate is sealed; thy opening words do naught to reassure us.

MES. Ah, woe is me! I do repeat; for beside the scenes of woe already enacted I bring tidings of new horror.

CRE. What is thy tale?

MES. Thy sister's sons are now no more, Creon.

CRE. Alas! thou hast a heavy tale of woe for me and Thebes!

CHO.[1] O house of Œdipus, hast thou heard these tidings?

CRE. Of sons slain by the self-same fate.

CHO. A tale to make it weep, were it endowed with sense.

CRE. Oh! most grievous stroke of fate! woe is me for my sorrows! woe!

MES. Woe indeed! didst thou but know the sorrows still to tell.

CRE. How can they be more hard to bear than these?

MES. With her two sons thy sister has sought her death.

CHO. Loudly, loudly raise the wail, and with white hands smite upon your heads!

CRE. Ah! woe is thee, Jocasta! what an end to life and marriage hast thou found the riddling of the Sphinx! But tell me how her two sons wrought the bloody deed, the struggle caused by the curse of Œdipus.

MES. Of our successes before the towers thou knowest, for the walls are not so far away as to prevent thy learning each event as it occurred. Now when they, [the sons of aged Œdipus,][2] had donned their brazen mail, they went and took their stand betwixt the hosts, [chieftains both and generals too,][3] to decide the day by single combat. Then Polynices, turning his eyes towards Argos, lifted up a prayer; "O Hera, awful queen,—for thy servant I am, since I have wedded the daughter of Adrastus and dwell in his land,—grant that I may slay my brother, and stain my lifted hand with the blood of my conquered foe. [A shameful prize it is I ask, my own brother's blood." And to many an eye the tear would rise at their sad fate, and men looked at one another, casting their glances round.][4]

[1] Lines 1341-2 are thus assigned by Hermann. Kirchhoff and Nauck give them to Creon, but regard l. 1342 as interpolated.

[2] Kirchhoff considers this line a repetition of l. 1243.

[3] Rejected by Valckenaer.

[4] Lines 1369-71 are also rejected by Valckenaer.

But Eteocles, looking towards the temple of Pallas with the golden shield, prayed thus, "Daughter of Zeus, grant that this right arm may launch the spear of victory against my brother's breast and slay him who hath come to sack my country."[1] Soon as the Tuscan trumpet blew, the signal for the bloody fray, like the torch that falls,[2] they darted wildly at one another and, like boars whetting their savage tusks, began the fray, their beards wet with foam; and they kept shooting out their spears, but each couched beneath his shield to let the steel glance idly off; but if either saw the other's face above the rim, he would aim his lance thereat, eager to outwit him.

But both kept such careful outlook through the spy-holes in their shields, that their weapons found naught to do; while from the on-lookers far more[3] than the combatants trickled the sweat caused by terror for their friends. Suddenly Eteocles, in kicking aside a stone that rolled beneath his tread, exposed a limb outside his shield, and Polynices seeing a chance of dealing him a blow, aimed a dart at it, and the Argive shaft went through his leg; whereat the Danai, one and all, cried out for joy. But the wounded man, seeing a shoulder unguarded in this effort, plunged his spear with all his might[4] into the breast of Polynices, restoring gladness to the citizens of Thebes, though he brake off the spear-head; and so, at a loss for a weapon, he retreated foot by foot, till catching up a splintered rock he let it fly and shivered the other's spear; and now was the combat equal, for each had lost his lance. Then clutching their sword-hilts they closed, and round

[1] Some reject this line here; it occurs also at l. 756.

[2] This was the signal for the start at the Lampadephoria, an Athenian ceremony at the festivals of the fire-gods Prometheus, Hephaestus and Athena.

[3] Nauck reads *πᾶσιν* for *πλείων*, and excludes line 1389.

[4] Reading *βίᾳ*, which, however, Kirchhoff regards as conjectural.

and round, with shields close-locked, they waged their wild warfare. Anon Eteocles introduced that crafty Thessalian trick, having some knowledge thereof from his intercourse with that country; disengaging himself from the immediate contest, he drew back his left foot but kept his eye closely on the pit of the other's stomach from a distance; then advancing his right foot he plunged his weapon through his navel and fixed it in his spine. Down falls Polynices, blood-bespattered, ribs and belly contracting in his agony. But that other, thinking his victory now complete, threw down his sword and set to spoiling him, wholly intent thereon, without a thought for himself. And this indeed was his ruin; for Polynices, who had fallen first, was still faintly breathing, and having in his grievous fall retained his sword, he made a last effort and drove it through the heart of Eteocles. There they lie, fallen side by side, biting the dust with their teeth, without having decided the mastery.

CHO. Ah, woe is thee! Œdipus, for thy sorrows! how[1] I pity thee! Heaven, it seems, has fulfilled those curses of thine.

MES. Now hear what further woes succeeded. Just as her two sons had fallen and lay dying, comes their wretched mother on the scene, [her daughter with her, in hot haste];[2] and when she saw their mortal wounds, "Too late," she moaned, "my sons, the help I bring;" and throwing herself on each in turn she wept and wailed, sorrowing o'er all her toil in suckling[3] them; and so too their sister, who was with her, "Supporters of your mother's age! dear brothers, leaving me forlorn, unwed!" Then prince Eteocles with one deep dying gasp, hearing his mother's cry, laid on her his clammy hand, and though he could

[1] Reading σ' ὅσον with Hermann.

[2] Omitted as spurious by most critics after Valckenaer.

[3] μαστῶν, but Nauck's μάτην is plausible.

not say a word, his moistened eye was eloquent to prove his love. But Polynices was still alive, and seeing his sister and his aged mother he said, "Mother mine, our end is come; I pity thee and my sister Antigone and my dead brother. For I loved him though he turned my foe, I loved him, yes! in spite of all. Bury me, mother mine, and thou, my sister dear, in my native soil; pacify the city's wrath that I may get at least that much of my own fatherland, although I lost my home. With thy hand, mother, close mine eyes (therewith he himself places her fingers on the lids); and fare ye well; for already the darkness wraps me round."

So both at once breathed out their life of sorrow. But when their mother saw this sad mischance, in her o'ermastering grief she snatched from a corpse its sword and wrought an awful deed, driving the steel right through her throat; and there she lies, dead with the dead she loved so well, her arms thrown round them both.

Thereon the host sprang to their feet and fell to wrangling, we maintaining that victory rested with my master, they with theirs; and amid our leaders the contention raged, some holding that Polynices gave the first wound with his spear, others that, as both were dead, victory rested with neither. Meantime Antigone crept away from the host;[1] and those others rushed to their weapons, but by some lucky forethought the folk of Cadmus had sat down under arms; and by a sudden attack we surprised the Argive host before it was fully equipped. Not one withstood our onset, and they filled the plain with fugitives, while blood was streaming from the countless dead our spears had slain. Soon as victory crowned our warfare, some began to rear an image to Zeus for the foe's defeat, others were stripping the Argive dead of their shields and sending their spoils inside the battlements; and others with Antigone are bringing her dead

[1] Line 1465 is rejected by Valckenaer.

brothers hither for their friends to mourn. So the result of this struggle to our city hovers between the two extremes of good and evil fortune. [*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHO. No longer do the misfortunes of this house extend to hearsay only; three corpses of the slain lie here at the palace for all to see, who by one common death have passed to their life of gloom.

ANT. No veil I draw o'er my tender cheek shaded with its clustering curls; no shame I feel from maiden modesty at the hot blood mantling 'neath my eyes, the blush upon my face, as I hurry wildly on in death's train, casting from my hair its tire and letting my delicate robe[1] of saffron hue fly loose, a tearful escort to the dead. Ah me!

Woe to thee, Polynices! rightly named, I trow; woe to thee, Thebes! no mere strife to end in strife was thine; but murder completed by murder hath brought the house of Œdipus to ruin with bloodshed dire[2] and grim. O my home, my home! what[3] minstrel can I summon from the dead to chant a fitting dirge o'er my tearful fate, as I bear these three corpses of my kin, my mother and her sons, a welcome sight to the avenging fiend that destroyed the house of Œdipus, root and branch, in the hour that his shrewdness solved the Sphinx's riddling rhyme and slew that savage songstress. Woe is me! my father! what other Hellene or barbarian, what noble soul among the bygone tribes of man's poor mortal race ever endured the anguish of such visible afflictions?

Ah! poor maid, how piteous is thy plaint! What bird from its covert 'mid the leafy oak or soaring pine-tree's

[1] *στολίδα τρυφᾶς*, but Kirchhoff reads *χλιδᾶς* from a Scholium.

[2] Dindorf omits *αἵματι ξεινῷ*.

[3] Lines 1499-1500 are almost certainly corrupt. Paley suggests that *προσῳδὸν* is a gloss, and that the true reading is *ἢ τινὰ μουσο- πόλον στοναχᾶς . . . . ἀγκαλίσω*; I have adopted *στοναχᾶς* in the translation.

branch will come[1] to mourn with me, the maid left motherless, with cries of woe, lamenting, ere it comes, the piteous lonely life, that henceforth must be alway mine with tears that ever stream? On which of these corpses shall I throw my offerings first, plucking the hair from my head? on the breast of the mother that suckled[2] me, or beside the ghastly death-wounds of my brothers' corpses? Woe to thee, Œdipus, my aged sire with sightless orbs, leave thy roof, disclose the misery of thy life, thou that draggest out a weary existence within the house, having cast a mist of darkness o'er thine eyes. Dost hear, thou whose aged step now gropes its way across the court, now seeks repose on wretched pallet couch?

ŒD. Why, daughter, hast thou dragged me to the light, supporting my blind footsteps from the gloom of my chamber, where I lie upon my bed and make piteous moan, a hoary sufferer, invisible as a phantom of the air, or as a spirit from the pit, or as a dream that flies?

ANT. Father, there are tidings of sorrow for thee to bear; no more thy sons behold the light, or thy wife who ever would toil to tend thy blind footsteps as with a staff. Alas for thee, my sire!

ŒD. Ah me, the sorrows I endure! I may well say that.[3] Tell me, child, what fate o'ertook those three, and how they left the light.

ANT. Not to reproach or mock thee say I this, but in all sadness; 'tis thy own avenging curse, with all its load of slaughter, fire, and ruthless war, that is fallen on thy sons. Alas for thee, my sire!

[1] Paley on his own conjecture inserts *εἶσιν* to complete the sense and metre.

[2] *γάλακτος*, but *μαστοὶ γαλακτὸς* is scarcely a Greek expression. Nauck proposes *ταλαίνας*.

[3] Reading with Hermann *ὤμοι ἐμῶν παθέων, πάρ' ἀυτεῖν*. He regards *στενάχειν* as interpolated.

ŒD. Ah me!

ANT. Why that groan?

ŒD. 'Tis for my sons.

ANT. Couldst thou have looked towards yon sun-god's four-horsed car and turned the light of thine eyes on these corpses, it would have been agony to thee.

ŒD. 'Tis clear enough how their evil fate o'ertook my sons; but she, my poor wife—oh! tell me, daughter, how she came to die.

ANT. All saw her weep and heard her moan, as she rushed forth to carry to her sons her last appeal, a mother's breast. But the mother found her sons at the Electran gate, in a meadow where the lotus blooms, fighting out their duel like lions in their lair, eager to wound each other with spears, their blood already congealed, a murderous libation to the Death-god poured out by Ares. Then, snatching from a corpse a sword of hammered bronze, she plunged it in her flesh, and in sorrow for her sons fell with her arms around them. So to-day, father, the god, whose'er this issue is, has gathered to a head the sum of suffering for our house.

CHO. To-day is the beginning of many troubles to the house of Œdipus; may he live to be more fortunate!

CRE. Cease now your lamentations; 'tis time we bethought us of their burial. Hear what I have to say, Œdipus. Eteocles, thy son, left me to rule this land, by assigning it as a marriage portion to Haemon with the hand of thy daughter Antigone. Wherefore I will no longer permit thee to dwell therein, for Teiresias plainly declared that the city would never prosper so long as thou wert in the land. So begone! And this I say not to flout thee, nor because I bear thee any grudge, but from fear that some calamity will come upon the realm by reason of those fiends that dog thy steps.

ŒD. O destiny! to what a life of pain and sorrow didst

thou bear me beyond all men that ever were,[1] e'en from the very first; yea for when I was yet unborn, or ever I had left my mother's womb and seen the light, Apollo foretold to Laius that I should become my father's murderer; woe is me! So, as soon as I was born, my father tried to end again[2] the hapless life he had given, deeming me his foe, for it was fated he should die at my hand; so he sent me still unweaned to make a pitiful meal for beasts, but[3] I escaped from that. Ah! would that Cithæron had sunk into hell's yawning abyss, in that it slew me not! Instead thereof Fate made me a slave in the service of Polybus; and I, poor wretch, after slaying my own father came to wed my mother to her sorrow, and begat sons that were my brothers, whom also I have destroyed, by bequeathing unto them the legacy of curses I received from Laius.[4] For nature did not make me so void of understanding, that I should have devised these horrors against my own eyes and my children's life without the intervention of some god. Let that pass. What am I, poor wretch, to do? Who now will be my guide and tend the blind man's step? Shall she, that is dead? Were she alive, I know right well she would. My pair of gallant sons, then? But they are gone from me. Am I still so young myself that I can find a livelihood? Whence could I? O Creon, why seek thus to slay me utterly? For so thou wilt, if thou banish me from the land. Yet will I never twine my arms about thy knees and betray cowardice, for I will not belie my former gallant soul, no! not for all my evil case.[5]

CRE. Thy words are brave in refusing to touch my knees, and I am equally resolved not to let thee abide in the land.[6]

[1] Valckenaer rejects line 1596. [2] *αὖθις*. Nauck *αὐτὸς*.

[3] Lines 1604-7 are regarded as spurious by Hartung and Dindorf.

[4] Dindorf regards line 1611 as spurious.

[5] It is worthy of notice that nearly every line in this speech has been questioned by one critic or another; possibly it is entirely spurious.

[6] Paley suspects lines 1625-6 as much as the preceding speech.

For these dead, bear one forthwith to the palace; but the other, who came with stranger folk to sack his native town, the dead Polynices, cast forth unburied beyond our frontiers. To all the race of Cadmus shall this be proclaimed, that whosoe'er is caught decking his corpse with wreaths or giving it burial, shall be requited with death; [unwept, unburied let him lie, a prey to birds].[1] As for thee, Antigone, leave thy mourning for these lifeless three and betake thyself indoors to abide there in maiden state until to-morrow, when Haemon waits to wed thee.[2]

ANT. O father, in what cruel misery are we plunged! For thee I mourn more than for the dead; for in thy woes there is no opposite to trouble, but universal sorrow is thy lot. As for thee, thou new-made king, why, I ask, dost thou mock my father thus with banishment?[3] why start making laws over a helpless corpse?

CRE. This was what Eteocles, not I, resolved.

ANT. A foolish thought, and foolish art thou for entertaining it!

CRE. What! ought I not to carry out his behests?

ANT. No; not if they are wrong and ill-advised.

CRE. Why, is it not just for that other to be given to the dogs?

ANT. Nay, the vengeance ye are exacting is no lawful one.

CRE. It is; for he was his country's foe, though not a foeman born.

ANT. Well, to fate he rendered up his destinies.[4]

CRE. Let him now pay forfeit in his burial too.

[1] Rejected by all editors, save Klotz, since Valckenaer.

[2] Lines 1637-8 are condemned by Dindorf as spurious. Paley suggests that of the whole speech lines 1627-33 alone are genuine.

[3] Line 1644 is rejected by many editors after Valckenaer.

[4] This line is generally regarded as corrupt; the required sense seems to be "well, if he *was* a foe, he met a foe's deserts by being slain." None of the conjectures are at all convincing.

ANT. What crime did he commit in coming to claim his heritage?

CRE. Be very sure of this, yon man shall have no burial.

ANT. I will bury him, although the state forbids.

CRE. Do so, and thou wilt be making thy own grave by his.

ANT. A noble end, for two so near and dear to be laid side by side!

CRE. (*to his servants.*) Ho! seize and bear her within the palace.

ANT. Never! for I will not loose my hold upon this corpse.

CRE. Heaven's decrees, girl, fit not thy fancies.

ANT. Decrees! here is another, "No insult to the dead."

CRE. Be sure that none shall sprinkle over this corpse the moistened dust.

ANT. O Creon, by my mother's corpse, by Jocasta, I implore thee!

CRE. 'Tis but lost labour; thou wilt not gain thy prayer.

ANT. Let me but bathe the dead body—

CRE. Nay, that would be part of what the city is forbidden.

ANT. At least let me bandage the gaping wounds.

CRE. No; thou shalt never pay honour to this corpse.

ANT. O my darling! one kiss at least will I print upon thy lips.

CRE. Do not[1] let this mourning bring disaster on thy marriage.

ANT. Marriage! dost think I will live to wed thy son?

CRE. Most certainly thou must; how wilt thou escape the match?

ANT. Then if I must, our wedding-night will find another Danaid bride in me.

[1] Reading *οὐ μὴ* with Kirchhoff and Paley.

CRE. [*Turning to* ŒDIPUS.] Dost witness how boldly she reproached me?

ANT. Witness this steel, the sword by which I swear!

CRE. Why art so bent on being released from this marriage?

ANT. I mean to share my hapless father's exile.

CRE. A noble spirit thine but somewhat touched with folly.

ANT. Likewise will I share his death, I tell thee further.

CRE. Go, leave the land; thou shalt not murder son of mine. [*Exit* CREON.

ŒD. Daughter, for this loyal spirit I thank thee.

ANT. Were I to wed, then thou, my father, wouldst be alone in thy exile.[1]

ŒD. Abide here and be happy; I will bear my own load of sorrow.

ANT. And who shall tend thee in thy blindness, father?

ŒD. Where fate appoints, there will I lay me down upon the ground.

ANT. Where is now the famous Œdipus, where that famous riddle?

ŒD. Lost for ever! one day made, and one day marred my fortune.

ANT. May not I too share thy sorrows?

ŒD. To wander with her blinded sire were shame unto his child.

ANT. Not so, father, but glory rather, if she be a maid discreet.

ŒD. Lead me nigh that I may touch thy mother's corpse.

ANT. So! embrace the aged form so dear to thee.

ŒD. Woe is thee, thy motherhood, thy marriage most unblest!

ANT. A piteous corpse, a prey to every ill at once!

[1] Paley unnecessarily prints this line with an interrogation.

ŒD. Where lies the corpse of Eteocles, and of Polynices, where?

ANT. Both lie stretched before thee, side by side.

ŒD. Lay the blind man's hand upon his poor sons' brows.

ANT. There then! touch the dead, thy children.

ŒD. Woe for you! dear fallen sons, sad offspring of a sire as sad!

ANT. O my brother Polynices, name most dear to me!

ŒD. Now is the oracle of Loxias being fulfilled, my child.

ANT. What oracle was that? canst thou have further woes to tell?

ŒD. That I should die in glorious Athens after a life of wandering.

ANT. Where? what fenced town in Attica will take thee in?

ŒD. Hallowed Colonus, home of the god of steeds. Come then, attend on thy blind father, since thou art minded to share his exile.

ANT. To wretched exile go thy way; stretch forth thy hand, my aged sire, taking me to guide thee, like a breeze that speedeth barques.

ŒD. See, daughter, I am advancing; be thou my guide, poor child.

ANT. Ah, poor indeed! the saddest maid of all in Thebes.

ŒD. Where am I planting my aged step? Bring my staff, child.

ANT. This way, this way, father mine! plant thy footsteps here, like a dream, for all the strength thou hast.

ŒD. Woe unto thee that art driving my aged limbs in grievous exile from their land! Ah me! the sorrows I endure!

ANT. "Endure"! why speak of enduring? Justice regardeth not the sinner and requiteth not men's follies.

ŒD. I am he, whose name passed into high songs of victory because I guessed the maiden's baffling riddle.

ANT. Thou art bringing up again the reproach of the Sphinx. Talk no more of past success. This misery was in store for thee all the while, to become an exile from thy country and die thou knowest not where; while I, bequeathing to my girlish friends tears of sad regret, must go forth from my native land, roaming as no maiden ought.

Ah! this dutiful resolve[1] will crown me with glory in respect of my father's sufferings. Woe is me for the insults heaped on thee and on my brother whose dead body is cast forth from the palace unburied; poor boy! I will yet bury him secretly, though I have to die for it, father.

ŒD. To thy companions show thyself.

ANT. My own laments suffice.

ŒD. Go pray then at the altars.

ANT. They are weary of my piteous tale.

ŒD. At least go seek the Bromian god in his hallowed haunt amongst the Mænads' hills.

ANT. Offering homage that is no homage[2] in Heaven's eyes to him in whose honour I once fringed my dress with the Theban fawn-skin and led the dance upon the hills for the holy choir of Semele?

ŒD. My noble fellow-countrymen, behold me; I am Œdipus, [who solved the famous riddle, and once was first of men,][3] I who alone cut short the murderous Sphinx's tyranny am now myself expelled the land in shame and misery. Go to; why make this moan and bootless lamen-

[1] It is not clear whether φεῦ τὸ χοήσιμον φρενῶν should be assigned to Œdipus or to Antigone. The Schol. found both arrangements; modern critics agree in giving them to Antigone.

[2] The meaning apparently is that as she would be doing so unwillingly, it would be no real homage and therefore better left undone.

[3] This line is generally regarded as interpolated from Soph. Œd. R., l. 1524.

tation? Weak mortal as I am, I must endure the fate that God decrees.

CHO. Hail! majestic Victory! keep thou my life nor ever cease to crown my song!

ORESTES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ELECTRA.
HELEN.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE MAIDENS.
ORESTES.
MENELAUS.
PYLADES.
MESSENGER.
HERMIONE.
A PHRYGIAN EUNUCH, IN HELEN'S RETINUE.
APOLLO.
TYNDAREUS.

Scene.—Before the royal palace at Argos.

ORESTES.

ELE. (ORESTES *lies sleeping on a couch in the background.*) There is naught so terrible to describe, be it physical pain or heaven-sent affliction,[1] that man's nature may not have to bear the burden of it. Tantalus, for instance, once so prosperous,—and I am not now taunting him with his misfortunes,—that Tantalus, the reputed son of Zeus, hangs suspended in mid air, quailing at the crag which looms above his head; paying this penalty, they say, for the shameful weakness he displayed in failing to keep a bridle on his lips, when admitted by gods, though he was but a mortal, to share the honours of their feasts like one of them.

He it was that begat Pelops, the father of Atreus, for whom the goddess,[2] when she had carded her wool, spun a web of strife, even to the making of war with his own brother Thyestes. But why need I repeat that hideous tale?

Well, Atreus slew Thyestes' children and feasted him on them; but,—passing over intermediate events,—from Atreus and Ærope of Crete sprang Agamemnon, that famous chief, —if his was really fame,—and Menelaus. Now it was this Menelaus who married Helen, Heaven's abhorrence; while his brother, King Agamemnon, took Clytemnestra to wife, name of note in Hellas, and we three daughters were his issue, Chrysothemis, Iphigenia, and myself Electra; also a son Orestes; all of that one accursed mother, who slew her

[1] *i.e.*, madness.

[2] *i.e.*, Destiny. The Scholiast notices a variant reading Ἔρως.

lord, after snaring him in a robe that had no outlet. Her reason a maiden's lips may not declare, and so I leave that unexplained for the world to guess at. What need for me to charge Phœbus with wrong-doing, though he instigated Orestes to slay his own mother, a deed that few approved; still it was his obedience to the god that made him slay her; I, too, feebly as a woman would, shared in the deed of blood, as did Pylades who helped us to bring it about.

After this my poor Orestes fell sick of a cruel wasting disease; upon his couch he lies prostrated,[1] and it is his mother's blood that goads him into frenzied fits; this I say, from dread of naming those goddesses, whose terrors are chasing him before them,—even the Eumenides. 'Tis now the sixth day since the body of his murdered mother was committed to the cleansing fire; since then no food has passed his lips, nor hath he washed his skin; but wrapped in his cloak he weeps in his lucid moments, whenever the fever leaves him; otherwhiles he bounds headlong from his couch, as a colt when it is loosed from the yoke. Moreover this city of Argos has decreed, that no man give us shelter at his fireside or speak to matricides like us; yea, and this is the fateful day, on which Argos will decide our sentence, whether we are both to die by stoning, or to whet the steel and plunge it in our necks.[2] There is, 'tis true, one hope of escape still left us; Menelaus has landed from Troy; his fleet now crowds the haven of Nauplia where he is come to anchor, returned at last from Troy after ceaseless wanderings; but Helen, that "lady of sorrows," as she styles herself, hath he sent on to our palace, carefully waiting for the night, lest any of those parents whose sons were slain beneath the walls of Troy, might see her if she went by day, and set to stoning her. Within she sits, weeping for her sister and

[1] Reading πεσών τ' with Nauck after Reiske.

[2] Dindorf considers lines 50-51 spurious. Nauck, after Herwerden, rejects l. 51.

the calamities of her family, and yet *she* hath still some solace in her woe; for Hermione, the child she left at home in the hour she sailed for Troy,—the maid whom Menelaus brought from Sparta and entrusted to my mother's keeping, —is still a cause of joy to her and a reason to forget her sorrows.

I, meantime, am watching each approach,[1] against the moment I see Menelaus arriving; for unless we find some safety there, we have but a feeble anchor[2] to ride on otherwise.

A helpless thing, an unlucky house!

HEL. Daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, hapless Electra, too long now left a maid unwed! how is it with thee and thy brother, [this ill-starred Orestes who slew his mother!][3] Speak; for referring the sin as I do to Phœbus, I incur no pollution by letting thee accost me; and yet I am truly sorry for the fate of my sister Clytemnestra, on whom I ne'er set eyes after I was driven by heaven-sent frenzy to sail on my disastrous voyage to Ilium; but now that I am parted from her I bewail our misfortunes.

ELE. Prithee, Helen, why should I speak of that which thine own eyes can see [the son of Agamemnon in his misery?][4]

Beside his wretched corpse I sit, a sleepless sentinel; for corpse he is, so faint his breath;[5] not that I reproach him with his sufferings; but thou art[6] highly blest and thy husband too, and ye are come upon us in the hour of adversity.

[1] Paley with Musgrave reads *εἰς ὁδὸν*; so too Nauck. The old reading is *εἴσοδον*.

[2] Instead of MSS. *ῥώμης* Nauck reads *ῥοπῆς*.

[3] Omitted by Kirchhoff as spurious.

[4] Regarded by Kirchhoff as spurious.

[5] *πνοῆς*; but Hartung *ῥοπῆς*.

[6] Reading *σὺ δ' εἶ . . ., ἥκετον*.

HEL. How long hath he been laid thus upon his couch?

ELE. Ever since he spilt his mother's blood—.

HEL. Unhappy wretch! unhappy mother! what a death she died!

ELE. Unhappy enough to succumb to his misery.

HEL. Prithee, maiden, wilt hear me a moment?

ELE. Aye, with such small leisure as this watching o'er a brother leaves.

HEL. Wilt go for me to my sister's tomb?

ELE. Wouldst have me seek my mother's tomb? And why?

HEL. To carry an offering of hair and a libation from me.

ELE. Art forbidden then to go to the tombs of those thou lovest?

HEL. Nay, but I am ashamed to show myself in Argos.

ELE. A late repentance surely for one who left her home so shamefully then.

HEL. Thou hast told the truth, but thy telling is not kind to me.

ELE. What is this supposed modesty before the eyes of Mycenæ that possesses thee?

HEL. I am afraid of the fathers of those who lie dead beneath the walls of Ilium.

ELE. Good[1] cause for fear; thy name is on every tongue in Argos.

HEL. Then free me of my fear and grant me this boon.

ELE. I could not bear to face my mother's grave.

HEL. And yet 'twere shame indeed to send these offerings by a servant's hand.

ELE. Then why not send thy daughter Hermione?

HEL. 'Tis not seemly for a tender maid to make her way amongst a crowd.

[1] Reading δεινὸν γάρ· Ἄργει τ' (Porson). Hermann, after Matthiae, prefers δεινὸν γὰρ Ἄργει γ' ἀναβοᾷ.

ELE. And yet she would thus be repaying her dead foster-mother's care.

HEL. True; thou hast convinced me, maiden. Yes, I *will*[1] send my daughter; for thou art right. [*Calling.*] Hermione, my child, come forth before the palace; take these libations and these tresses of mine in thy hands, and go pour round Clytemnestra's tomb a mingled cup of honey, milk, and frothing wine; then stand upon the heaped-up grave, and proclaim therefrom, "Helen, thy sister, sends thee these libations as her gift, fearing herself to approach thy tomb from terror of the Argive mob;" and bid her harbour kindly thoughts towards me and thee and my husband; towards these two wretched sufferers, too, whom Heaven hath afflicted. Likewise promise that I will pay in full whatever funeral gifts are due from me to a sister. Now go, my child, and tarry not; and soon as thou hast made the offering at the tomb, bethink thee of thy return.

[*Exit* HELEN.

ELE. O human nature, what a grievous curse thou art in this world! and what salvation, too, to those who have a goodly heritage therein!

Did ye mark how she cut off her hair only at[2] the ends, careful to preserve its beauty? 'Tis the same woman as of old. May Heaven's hate pursue thee! for thou hast proved the ruin of me and my poor brother and all Hellas.

Alack! here are my friends once more, coming to unite their plaintive dirge with mine; they will soon put an end to my brother's peaceful sleep and cause my tears to flow when I see his frenzied fit.

Good friends, step softly; not a sound! not a whisper! for though this kindness is well-meant, rouse him and I shall rue it.

[1] Reading *ναὶ, πέμψομαί γε* (Paley). Hermann and Dindorf omit the line as spurious, others read *καὶ πέμψομέν γε.*

[2] *παρ'*; Portus *γὰρ.*

CHO. Hush! hush! let your footsteps fall lightly! not a sound! [not a whisper!][1]

ELE. Further, further from his couch! I beseech ye.

CHO. There! there! I obey.

ELE. Hush! hush! good friend, I pray. Soft as the breath of slender reedy pipe be thy every accent!

CHO. Hark, how soft and low I drop my voice!

ELE. Yes, lower[2] thy voice e'en thus; approach now, softly, softly! Tell me what reason ye had for coming at all. 'Tis so long since he laid him down to sleep.

CHO. How is it with him? Impart thy news, dear lady. Is it weal[3] or woe I am to tell?

ELE. He is still alive, but his moans grow feeble.

CHO. What sayest thou? [*turning to* ORESTES.] Poor wretch!

ELE. Awake him from the deep sweet slumber he is now enjoying and thou wilt cause his death.

CHO. Ah, poor sufferer! victim of Heaven's vengeful hate!

ELE. Ah, misery! It seems it was a wicked utterance by a wicked god delivered, the day that Loxias from his seat upon the tripod of Themis decreed my mother's most unnatural[4] murder.

CHO. He stirs beneath his robe! Dost see?

ELE. Alas! I do; thy noisy chatter has roused him from his sleep.

CHO. Nay, methinks he slumbers still.

[1] These last words are probably interpolated from l. 137 (Hermann).

[2] *κάραγε*. Hermann and Klotz follow a Scholiast in thus explaining this word. Paley refuses this explanation, and says it is a phrase borrowed from a ship coming to land, "Come on."

[3] The words *τίνα τύχαν εἶπω*; are suspected by Nauck.

[4] *ἀπόφονον ἄρ' ἐξίκασε*. Schol. *ἄτοπον*. Cf. *infra* l. 192. Hermann reads *ἀπεδίκασε* "acquitted," *i.e.*, pronounced that the murder was no murder.

ELE. Begone! quit the house! retrace thy footsteps! a truce to this din!

CHO. He sleeps. Thou art right.[1]

ELE. O Night, majestic queen, giver of sleep to toiling men, rise from the abyss of Erebus and wing thy way to the palace of Agamemnon! For beneath our load of misery and woe we sink, aye, sink oppressed.

There! [*To the* Chorus.] that noise again! Do be still and keep that high-pitched voice of thine away from his couch; suffer him to enjoy his sleep in peace!

CHO. Tell me, what end awaits his troubles?

ELE. Death, death; what else? for he does not even miss his food.

CHO. Why, then his doom is full in view.

ELE. Phœbus marked us out as his victims by imposing a foul unnatural task, even the shedding of the blood of our mother, who slew our sire.

CHO. 'Twas just, but 'twas not well.

ELE. Dead, dead, O mother mine! and thou hast slain a father and these the children of thy womb; for we are dead or as the dead. Yes, thou art in thy grave, and more than half my life is spent in weeping and wailing and midnight lamentations; oh, look on[2] me! a maid unwed, unblest with babes, I drag out a joyless existence as if for ever.

CHO. My daughter Electra, from thy near station there see whether thy brother hath not passed away without thy knowing it; for I like not his utter prostration.

ORE. (*Awaking refreshed.*) Sweet charm of sleep! saviour in sickness! how dear to me thy coming was! how needed! All hail, majestic power, oblivion of woe! How wise this

[1] Possibly an answer to the remark of another member of the Chorus in l. 169. Paley has followed Kirchhoff's distribution of these lines.

[2] Reading ἔπιδ'. Klotz reads ἐπὶ δ' as if for ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐὲ. Hermann suggests as the possibly true reading ἄγαμος ἄτεκνος ἄφιλος ὅτι κ.τ.λ.

goddess is, how earnestly invoked by every suffering soul! (*Addressing* ELECTRA.) Whence came I hither? How is it I am here? for I have lost all previous recollection and remember nothing.

ELE. Dearest brother, how glad I was to see thee fall asleep! Wouldst have me take thee in my arms and lift thy body?

ORE. Take, oh! take me in thy arms, and from this sufferer's mouth and eyes wipe off the flakes of foam.

ELE. Ah! 'tis a service I love; nor do I scorn with sister's hand to tend a brother's limbs.

ORE. Prop me up, thy side to mine; brush the matted hair from off my face, for I see but dimly.

ELE. Ah, poor head! how squalid are thy locks become! How wild thy look from remaining so long unwashed!

ORE. Lay me once more upon the couch; when my fit leaves me, I am all unnerved, unstrung.

ELE. [*As she lays him down.*] Welcome to the sick man is his couch, for painful though it be to take thereto, yet is it necessary.

ORE. Set me upright once again, turn me round; it is their helplessness makes the sick so hard to please.

ELE. Wilt put thy feet upon the ground and take a step at last? Change is always pleasant.

ORE. That will I; for that has a semblance of health; and that seeming, though it be far from the reality, is preferable to this.

ELE. Hear me then, O brother mine, while yet the avenging fiends permit thee to use thy senses.

ORE. Hast news to tell? so it be good, thou dost me a kindness; but if it tend to my hurt, lo! I have sorrow enough.

ELE. Menelaus, thy father's brother, is arrived; in Nauplia his fleet lies at anchor.

ORE. Ha! is he come to cast a ray of light upon our

gloom, a man of our own kin who owes our sire a debt of gratitude?

ELE. Yes, he is come, and is bringing Helen with him from the walls of Troy; accept this as a sure proof of what I say.

ORE. Had he returned alone in safety, he were more to be envied; for if he is bringing his wife with him, he is bringing a load of mischief.

ELE. Tyndareus begat a race of daughters notorious for the shame they earned, infamous throughout Hellas.

ORE. Be thou then different from that evil brood, for well thou mayest, and that not only in profession, but also in heart.

ELE. Ah! brother, thine eye is growing wild, and in a moment art thou passing from thy recent saneness back to frenzy.

ORE. [*starting up wildly.*] Mother, I implore thee! let not loose on me those maidens with their bloodshot eyes and snaky hair.[1] [Ha! see, see where they approach to leap upon me!][2]

ELE. Lie still, poor sufferer, on thy couch; thine eye sees none of the things which thy fancy paints so clear.

ORE. O Phœbus! they will kill me, yon hounds of hell, death's priestesses with glaring eyes, terrific goddesses.

ELE. I will not let thee go; but with arms twined round thee will prevent thy piteous tossing to and fro.

ORE. Loose me! thou art one of those fiends that plague me, and art gripping me by the waist to hurl my body into Tartarus.

ELE. Woe is me! what succour can I find, seeing that we have Heaven's forces set against us?

ORE. Give me my horn-tipped bow, Apollo's gift, wherewith that god declared that I should defend myself against

[1] *i.e.*, The Eumenides.

[2] Rejected by Kirchhoff and Hartung as an interpolation.

these goddesses, if ever they sought to scare me with wild transports of madness.

A mortal hand will wound one of these goddesses, unless she vanish from my sight. Do ye not heed me, or mark the feathered shaft of my far-shooting bow ready to wing its flight? What! do ye linger still? Spread your pinions, skim the sky, and blame those oracles of Phœbus.

Ah! why am I raving, panting, gasping? Whither, oh! whither have I leapt from off my couch? Once more the storm is past; I see a calm.

Sister, why weepest thou, thy head wrapped in thy robe? I am ashamed that I should make thee a partner in my sufferings and distress a maid like thee through sickness of mine. Cease to fret for my troubles; for though thou didst consent to it, yet 'twas I that spilt our mother's blood. 'Tis Loxias I blame, for urging me on to do a deed most damned, encouraging me with words but no real help; for I am sure that, had I asked my father to his face whether I was to slay my mother, he would have implored me oft and earnestly by this beard never to plunge a murderer's sword into my mother's breast, since he would not thereby regain his life, whilst I, poor wretch, should be doomed to drain this cup of sorrow.

E'en as it is, dear sister, unveil thy face and cease to weep, despite our abject misery; and whensoe'er thou seest me give way to despair, be it thine to calm and soothe the terrors and distorted fancies of my brain; likewise when sorrow comes to thee, I must be at thy side and give thee words of comfort; for to help our friends like this is a gracious task.

Seek thy chamber now, poor sister; lie down and close awhile thy sleepless eyes; take food and bathe thy body; for if thou leave me or fall sick from nursing me, my doom is sealed; for thou art the only champion I now have, by all the rest deserted, as thou seest.

ELE. I leave thee! never! With thee I am resolved to live and die; for 'tis the same; if thou diest, what can I, a woman, do? How shall I escape alone, reft of brother, sire, and friends?

Still if it be thy pleasure, I must do thy bidding. But lay thee down upon thy couch, and pay not too great heed to the terrors and alarms that scare thee from thy rest; lie still upon thy pallet bed; for e'en though one be not sick but only fancy it, this is a source of weariness and perplexity to mortals.[1] [*Exit* ELECTRA.

CHO. Ah! ye goddesses terrific, swiftly careering on outspread pinions, whose lot it is 'mid tears and groans to hold revel not with Bacchic rites; ye avenging spirits swarthy-hued, that dart along the spacious firmament, exacting a penalty for blood, a penalty for murder, to you I make my suppliant prayer: suffer the son of Agamemnon to forget his wild whirling[2] frenzy!

Ah, woe for the troublous task! which thou, poor wretch, didst strive to compass to thy ruin, listening to the voice prophetic, proclaimed aloud by Phœbus from the tripod throughout his sanctuary,[3] where is a secret spot they call "the navel of the earth."

O Zeus! What pity will be shown? what deadly struggle is here at hand, hurrying thee on o'er thy path of woe, a victim on whom some fiend is heaping tribulation, by bringing on thy house thy mother's bloodshed which drives thee raving mad? I weep for thee, for thee I weep.

Great prosperity abideth not amongst mankind; but some power divine, shaking it to and fro like the sail of a swift galley, plunges it deep in the waves of grievous affliction, boisterous and deadly as the waves of the sea. For what

[1] Nauck regards this line as spurious, and reads *δοξάζεις* with Aldus.

[2] There is some corruption here as the metre proves. Kirchhoff gives the passage up. The sense, however, is complete.

[3] *ἀνὰ δάπεδον*, rejected by Nauck, and the second *ἔλακεν* by Hartung.

new family am I henceforth to honour by preference other than that which sprung from a marriage divine, even from Tantalus?[1]

Behold a king draws near, prince Menelaus! From his magnificence[2] 'tis plain to see that he is a scion of the race of Tantalus.

All hail! thou that didst sail with a thousand ships to Asia's strand, and by Heaven's help accomplish all thy heart's desire, making good-fortune a friend to thyself.

MEN. All hail, my home! Some joy I feel on seeing thee again on my return from Troy, some sorrow too the sight recalls; for never yet have I beheld a house more closely encircled by the net of dire affliction.

Concerning Agamemnon's fate and the awful death he died at his wife's hands[3] I learnt as I was trying to put in at Malea, when the sailors' seer from out the waves, unerring Glaucus, Nereus' spokesman, brought the news to me; for he stationed himself in full view by our ship and thus addressed me, "Yonder, Menelaus, lies thy brother slain, plunged in a fatal bath, the last[4] his wife will ever give him;" filling high the cup of tears for me and my brave crew. Arrived at Nauplia, my wife already on the point of starting hither, I was dreaming of folding Orestes, Agamemnon's son, and his mother in a fond embrace, as if 'twere well with them, when I heard a mariner relate the murder of the daughter of Tyndareus. Tell me then, good girls, where to find the son of Agamemnon, the daring author of that fearful crime; for he was but a babe in Clytemnestra's arms that day I left my home to go to Troy, so that I should not recognize him, e'en were I to see him.

[1] *τὸν ἀπὸ Ταντάλου*, inclosed in brackets by Nauck as spurious.

[2] *πολλῇ ἀβροσύνῃ*, corrupt and not yet satisfactorily emended. Porson, Kirchhoff, and Nauck read *πολὺ δ' ἀβροσύνῃ*.

[3] Dindorf rejects line 361.

[4] Nauck reads *ἀρκυστάτοις*.

ORE. (*Staggering towards him from the couch.*) Behold the object of thy inquiry, Menelaus; this is Orestes. To thee will I of mine own accord relate my sufferings. But as the prelude to my speech I clasp thy knees in suppliant wise, seeking thus to tie[1] to thee the prayer of lips that lack the suppliant's bough; save me, for thou art arrived at the very crisis of my trouble.

MEN. Ye gods! what do I see? what death's-head greets my sight?

ORE. Thou art right; I *am* dead through misery, though I still gaze upon the sun.

MEN. How wild the look thy unkempt hair gives thee, poor wretch!

ORE. 'Tis not my looks, but my deeds that torture me.

MEN. How terribly thy tearless eyeballs glare!

ORE. My body is vanished and gone, though my name hath not yet deserted me.

MEN. Unsightly apparition, so different from what I expected!

ORE. In me behold a man that hath slain his hapless mother.

MEN. I have heard all; be chary[2] of thy tale of woe.

ORE. I will; but the deity is lavish of woe in my case.

MEN. What ails thee? what is thy deadly sickness?

ORE. My conscience; I know that I am guilty of an awful crime.

MEN. Explain thyself; wisdom is shown in clearness, not in obscurity.

ORE. 'Tis grief that is my chief complaint.

[1] The allusion is to the sacred wreaths worn by suppliants, one end of which they retained, while the other was fastened to the altar, thus identifying them with its sanctity.

[2] φείδου δ' ὀλιγάκις, *i.e.*, "spare thyself so as to speak seldom." Nauck proposes φείδου πολλάκις.

MEN. True; she is a goddess dire; yet are there cures for her.

ORE. Mad transports too, and the vengeance due to a mother's blood.

MEN. When did thy fit begin? which day was it?

ORE. On the day I was heaping the mound o'er my poor mother's grave.

MEN. When thou wast in the house, or watching by the pyre?

ORE. As I was waiting by night to gather up her bones.

MEN. Was any one else there to help thee rise?

ORE. Yes, Pylades who shared with me the bloody deed, my mother's murder.

MEN. What phantom forms[1] afflict thee thus?

ORE. Three maidens black as night I seem to see.

MEN. I know of whom thou speakest, but I will not name them.

ORE. Do not; they are too dread; thou wert wise to avoid naming them.[2]

MEN. Are these the fiends that persecute thee with the curse of kindred blood?

ORE. Oh! the torment I endure from their hot pursuit!

MEN. That they who have done an awful deed should be so done by is not strange.

ORE. Ah, well! I must have recourse in these troubles—

MEN. Speak not of dying; that were folly.

ORE. To Phœbus, by whose command I shed my mother's blood.

MEN. Showing[3] a strange ignorance of what is fair and right.

[1] Porson, Dindorf, and Nauck read *φαντασμάτων* rather than *ἐκ φασμάτων*.

[2] Reading with Hermann *εὐπαίδευτα δ' ἀπερρίπου λίγειν*.

[3] This line is perhaps intentionally vague; Menelaus referring to Orestes' ignorance in holding such a view, Orestes supposing him to be taunting the god.

ORE. We must obey the gods, whatever those gods are.

MEN. Spite of all this doth not Loxias help thy affliction?

ORE. He will in time; to wait like this is the way with gods.

MEN. How long is it since thy mother breathed her last?

ORE. This is now the sixth day; her funeral pyre is still warm.

MEN. How soon the goddesses arrived to require thy mother's blood of thee![1]

ORE. To cleverness I lay no claim, but I was a true friend[2] to friends.

MEN. Does thy father afford thee any help at all?

ORE. Not as yet; and delaying to do so is, methinks, equivalent to not doing it.

MEN. How dost thou stand towards the city after that deed of thine?

ORE. So hated am I that I cannot speak to any man.

MEN. Have not thy hands been even cleansed of their blood-guiltiness, as the law requires?

ORE. No; for where'er I go, the door is shut against me.

MEN. Which of the citizens drive thee from the land?

ORE. Œax,[3] who refers to my father his reason for hating Troy.

MEN. I understand; he is visiting on thee the blood of Palamedes.

ORE. I at least had naught to do with that; yet am I utterly[4] o'erthrown.

[1] This seems to be an ironical answer to line 420; so regarded the next line becomes intelligible, "I cannot argue that point; all I know is, I was loyal."

[2] Reading Brunck's correction ἔφυν φίλος. Paley thinks something is lost.

[3] Œax, the brother of Palamedes, who was unjustly put to death at Troy by Agamemnon at the instigation of Odysseus.

[4] διὰ τριῶν, lit., "in all the three bouts," three throws being considered a decisive defeat in wrestling.

MEN. Who else? some of the friends of Ægisthus perhaps?

ORE. Yes, they insult me, and the city listens to them now.

MEN. Will it not suffer thee to keep the sceptre of Agamemnon?

ORE. How should it? seeing that they will not suffer me to remain alive.

MEN. What[1] is their method? canst thou tell me plainly?

ORE. To-day is sentence to be passed upon me.

MEN. Exile, or death, or something else?

ORE. Death by stoning at the hands of the citizens.

MEN. Then why not cross the frontier and fly?

ORE. Why not? because I am hemmed in by a ring of armed men.

MEN. Private foes or Argive troops?

ORE. By all the citizens, to the end that I may die; 'tis shortly told.

MEN. Poor wretch! thou hast arrived at the extremity of woe.

ORE. In thee I still have hopes of escape from my troubles. Yea, since fortune smiles upon thy coming, impart to thy less favoured friends some of thy prosperity, not reserving that luck exclusively for thyself; no! take thy turn too at suffering, and so pay back my father's kindness to those who have a claim on thee. For such friends as desert us in the hour of adversity, are friends in name but not in reality.

CHO. Lo! Tyndareus, the Spartan, is making his way hither with the step of age, clad in black raiment, with his hair shorn short in mourning for his daughter.

ORE. Menelaus, I am ruined. See! Tyndareus approaches the man of all others I most shrink from facing, because of the deed I have done; for he it was that nursed me when a babe, and lavished on me many a fond caress, carrying me

[1] Reading with Nauck τί δρῶντες; ἢ τι καὶ σαφῶς εἰπεῖν ἔχεις;

about in his arms as the son of Agamemnon, and so did Leda; for they both regarded me as much as the Dioscuri.

Ah me! my wretched heart and soul! 'twas a sorry return I made them. What darkness can I find to veil my head? what cloud can I spread before me in my efforts to escape the old man's eye?

TYN. Where, where may I find Menelaus, my daughter's husband? for as I was pouring libations on Clytemnestra's grave I heard that he was come to Nauplia with his wife, safe home again after many a long year. Lead me to him; for I would fain stand at his right hand and give him greeting as a friend whom at last I see again.

MEN. Hail, reverend father! rival of Zeus for a bride!

TYN. All hail to thee! Menelaus, kinsman mine!

Ha! (*Catching sight of* ORESTES.) What an evil it is to be ignorant of the future! There lies that matricide before the house, a viper darting venom from his eyes, whom my soul abhors. What! Menelaus, speaking to a godless wretch like him?

MEN. And why not? He is the son of one whom I loved well.

TYN. *This* his son? this creature here?

MEN. Yes, his son; and therefore worthy of respect, albeit in distress.

TYN. Thou hast been so long amongst barbarians that thou art one of them.

MEN. Always to respect one's kith and kin is a custom in Hellas.

TYN. Aye, another custom is to yield a willing deference to the laws.

MEN. The wise hold that everything which depends on necessity, is its slave.

TYN. Keep that wisdom for thyself; I will not admit it.

MEN. No, for thou art angry, and old age is not wise.

TYN. What could a dispute about wisdom have to do

with him?[1] If right and wrong are clear to all, who was ever more senseless than this man, seeing that he never weighed the justice of the case, nor yet appealed to the universal law of Hellas? For instance, when Agamemnon breathed his last beneath the blow my daughter dealt upon his head,[2]—a deed most foul, which I will never defend,—he should have brought a charge against his mother and inflicted the penalty allowed by law for bloodshed, banishing her from his house; thus would he have gained the credit of forbearance from the calamity, keeping strictly to the law and showing his piety as well. As it is, he is come into the same misfortune as his mother; for though he had just cause for thinking her a wicked woman, he has surpassed her himself by murdering her. I will ask thee, Menelaus, just one question. Take this case: the wife of his bosom has slain him; *his* son follows suit and kills his mother in revenge; next the avenger's son to expiate this murder commits another; where, pray, will the chain of horrors end?

Our forefathers settled these matters the right way. They forbade any one with blood upon his hands to appear in their sight or cross their path; "purify[3] him by exile," said they, "but no retaliation!" Otherwise there must always have been one who, by taking the pollution last upon his hands, would be liable to have his own blood shed.

For my part I abhor wicked women, especially my daughter who slew her husband; Helen, too, thy own wife, will I ne'er commend; no! I would not even speak to her, and little I envy thee a voyage to Troy for so worthless a woman. But the law will I defend with all my might, seek-

[1] Reading πρὸς τύνδ' ἀγὼν ἄν τι σοφίας εἴη πέρι; (Nauck). Paley thinks that the line may be an interpolation.

[2] This line is probably corrupt; perhaps Hermann's proposal is as likely as any, κάρα θυγατρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς πληγεὶς ὕπο.

[3] Reading φυγαῖσι δ' ὁσιοῦν, ἀνταποκτείνειν δὲ μή.

ing to check this brutal spirit of murder, which is always the ruin of countries and cities alike. Wretch! (*Turning to* ORESTES.) Hadst thou no heart when thy mother was baring her breast in her appeal to thee? True; I did not witness that awful deed, yet do my poor old eyes run down with tears. One thing at least[1] attests the truth of what I say: thou art abhorred by Heaven, and this aimless wandering, these transports of madness and terror are thy atonement for a mother's blood. What need have I of others to testify where I can see for myself? Take warning therefore, Menelaus; seek not to oppose the gods from any wish to help this wretch, but leave him to be stoned to death by his fellow-citizens; [else set not foot on Sparta's soil.[2]] My daughter is dead, and she deserved her fate; but it should not have been his hand that slew her. In all except my daughters have I been a happy man; there my fortune stopped.

CHO. His is an enviable lot, who is blest in his children, and does not find himself brought into evil notoriety.

ORE. I am afraid to speak before thee, aged prince [in a matter where I am sure to grieve thee to the heart.[3]] Only let thy years, which frighten me from speaking, set no barrier in the path of my words, and I will go forward; but, as it is, I fear thy grey hairs. My crime is, I slew my mother; yet on another count this is no crime, being vengeance for my father.[4] What ought I to have done? Set one thing against another. My father begat me; thy daughter gave me birth, being the field that received the seed from another; for without a sire no child would ever be born.[5] So I

[1] Reading, with Hermann, ἓν δ' οὖν.

[2] This line is rejected by Hermann, whom most editors have followed.

[3] Probably spurious.

[4] These two lines, numbered 546-547, were transposed by Kirchhoff to their present position. In the first of them Hermann reads ἐγῷδ'.

[5] Line 554 is regarded by Nauck as spurious.

reasoned thus:[1] I ought to stand by the author of my being rather than the woman who undertook to rear me. Now thy daughter—*mother* I blush to call her—was engaged in secret[2] intrigues with a lover; (reviling her I shall revile myself; yet speak I will;) Ægisthus was that stealthy paramour who lived with her; him I slew, and after him I sacrificed my mother,—a crime, no doubt, but done to avenge my father. Now, as regards the matters for which I deserve to be stoned as thou threatenest, hear the service I am conferring on all Hellas. If women become so bold as to murder their husbands, taking refuge in their children, with the mother's breast to catch their pity, they would think nothing of destroying their husbands on any plea whatsoever. But I, by a horrible crime—such is thy exaggerated phrase—have put an end to this custom. I hated my mother and had good cause to slay her. She was false to her husband when he was gone from his home to fight for all Hellas at the head of its armies, neither did she keep his honour undefiled; and when her sin had found her out, she wreaked no punishment upon herself, but, to avoid the vengeance of her lord, visited her sins on my father and slew him. By Heaven! ill time as it is for me to mention Heaven, when defending the cause of murder; still, suppose I had by my silence consented to my mother's conduct, what would the murdered man have done to me? Would he not now for very hate be tormenting me with avenging fiends? or are there goddesses to help my mother, and are there none to aid him in his deeper wrong? Thou, yes! thou, old man, hast been my ruin by begetting a daughter so abandoned; for it was owing to her audacious deed that I lost my father and became my mother's murderer.

[1] Paley gives various good reasons for rejecting or emending ll. 555-556.

[2] Reading *ἰδίοισιν*, for which Nauck gives *ἀθέοισιν* in his text.

Attend,[1] I say. Telemachus did not kill the wife of Odysseus; why? because she wedded not a second husband, but the marriage-bed remained untainted in her halls. Once more; Apollo, who makes the navel of the earth his home, vouchsafing unerring prophecies to man, the god whom we obey in all he saith,[2]—'twas he to whom I hearkened when I slew my mother. Find him guilty of the crime, slay him; his was the sin, not mine. What ought I to have done? or is not the god competent to expiate the pollution when I refer it to him? Whither should one fly henceforth, if he will not rescue me from death after giving his commands?[3] Say not then that the deed was badly done, but unfortunately for me who did it.

A blessed life those mortals lead who make wise marriages; but those who wed unhappily are alike unfortunate in their public and private concerns.

CHO. 'Tis ever woman's way to thwart men's fortunes to the increase of their sorrow.

TYN. Since thou adoptest so bold a tone, suppressing naught, but answering me back in such wise that my heart is vexed within me, thou wilt incense[4] me to go to greater lengths in procuring thy execution; and I shall regard this as a fine addition to my purpose in coming hither to deck my daughter's grave. Yes; I will go to the chosen council of Argos and set the citizens, whether they will or not,[5] on thee and thy sister, that ye may suffer stoning. She deserves to die even more than thou, for it was she who embittered thee against thy mother by carrying tales to thine ear from

[1] Lines 588-590 are regarded by Dindorf as interpolated. The reading followed both in line 588 and 591 is *ὀρᾷς*.

[2] Line 593 is rejected by Nauck; also the words *καὶ κτείνετε—οὐκ ἐγώ* in lines 595-596.

[3] Reading *κελεύσας* without *ὁ* (Porson).

[4] Reading *ἀνάψεις*.

[5] Reading *ἐκοῦσαν οὐχ ἑκοῦσαν* (Canter).

time to time to whet thy hate the more [announcing dreams from Agamemnon],[1] and speaking of the amour with Ægisthus as an abomination to the gods in Hades, for even here on earth it was hateful, till she set the house ablaze with fires never kindled by Hephæstus. This I tell thee, Menelaus; and more,—I will perform it. If then thou makest my hatred or our connexion of any account, seek not to avert this miscreant's doom in direct defiance of the gods, but leave him to be stoned to death by the citizens[2]; else never set foot on Spartan soil. Remember thou hast been told all this, and choose not for friends the ungodly, excluding more righteous folk.

Ho! servants, lead me hence. [*Exit* TYNDAREUS.

ORE. Get thee gone! that the remainder of my speech may be addressed to Menelaus without interruption, free from the restrictions thy old age exerts.

Wherefore, Menelaus, art thou pacing round and round to think the matter over, up and down in thought perplexed?

MEN. Let me alone! I am somewhat at a loss, as I turn it over in my mind, towards which side I am to lean.

ORE. Do not then decide finally, but after first hearing what I have to say, then make up thy mind.

MEN. Good advice! say on. [There are occasions when silence would be better than speech; there are others when the reverse holds good.

ORE. I will begin forthwith. A long statement has advantages over a short one and is more intelligible to listen to.[3] Give me nothing of thine own, Menelaus, but repay what thou didst thyself receive from my father. (*As* MENELAUS *makes a deprecating gesture.*) 'Tis not goods I mean; save my life, and that is goods, the dearest I possess.

Say I am doing wrong. Well, I have a right to a little

[1] Regarded by Paley as interpolated.

[2] Nauck regards this line as spurious.

[3] Many ancient critics rejected these first two lines as un-Euripidean.

wrong-doing at thy hands to requite that wrong;[1] for my father Agamemnon also did wrong in gathering the host of Hellas and going up against Ilium, not that he had sinned himself, but he was trying to find a cure for the sin and wrong-doing of thy wife. So this is one thing thou art bound to pay me back. For he had really sold his life to thee, a duty owed by friend to friend, toiling hard in the press of battle that so thou mightest win thy wife again. This is what thou didst receive at Troy; make me the same return. For one brief day exert thyself, not ten full years, on my behalf, standing up in my defence.

As for the loan paid to Aulis in the blood of my sister,[2] I leave that to thy credit, not saying "Slay Hermione"; for in my present plight thou must needs have an advantage over me and I must let that pass. But grant my hapless sire this boon, my life and the life of her who has pined so long in maidenhood, my sister; for by my death I shall leave my father's house without an heir.

"Impossible!" thou'lt say. Why, there's the point of that old adage, "Friends are bound to succour friends in trouble." But when fortune giveth of her best, what need of friends? for God's help is enough of itself when he chooses to give it.

All Hellas credits thee with deep affection for thy wife—and I am not saying this with any subtle attempt at wheedling thee—by her I implore thee.[3]

(*As* MENELAUS *turns away.*) Ah me, my misery! at what a pass have I arrived! what avails my wretched effort? Still, (*preparing to make a final appeal*) 'tis my whole family on

[1] The argument seems to be: "as Agamemnon did wrong for Helen's wrong-doing in thy service, so do thou do wrong for my wrong-doing, (*i.e.*, slaying Clytemnestra) in Agamemnon's service." (Paley.)

[2] *i.e.*, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, when the fleet was weather-bound.

[3] The punctuation followed in this and the next three lines is Paley's, which gives a more pointed sense than any other suggested.

whose behalf I am making this appeal! O my uncle, my father's own brother! imagine that the dead man in his grave is listening, that his spirit is hovering o'er thy head and speaking through my lips. [I have said my say with reference to tears and groans and misfortunes, and I have begged my life—the aim of every man's endeavour, not of mine alone.] [1]

CHO. I, too, weak woman though I am, beseech thee, as thou hast the power, succour those in need.

MEN. Orestes, thou art a man for whom I have a deep regard, and I would fain help thee bear thy load of woe; yea, for it is a duty, too, to lend a kinsman such assistance by dying or slaying his enemies,[2] provided Heaven grants the means. I only wish I had that power granted me by the gods; as it is, I have arrived quite destitute of allies, after my long weary wanderings, with such feeble succour as my surviving friends afford. As then we should never get the better of Pelasgian Argos by fighting, our hopes now rest on this, the chance of prevailing by persuasion; and we must try that,[3] for how can you win a great cause by small efforts? it were senseless even to wish it. For when the people fall into a fury and their rage is still fresh, they are as hard to appease as a fierce fire is to quench; but if you gently slacken your hold[4] and yield a little to their tension, cautiously watching your opportunity, they may possibly exhaust their fit; and then as soon as they have spent their rage, thou mayest obtain whatever

[1] Paley shows good reason for regarding the last three lines of this speech as an interpolation, though he seems to stand alone in this opinion.

[2] Line 686 comes in so awkwardly here, that Hermann and Nauck have rejected it as spurious.

[3] To bring out the force of γάρ, I have supplied what I conceive to be the ellipse, cf. l. 706.

[4] The metaphor is from slackening a rope at sea.

thou wilt from them without any trouble; for they have a natural sense of pity, and a hot temper too, an invaluable quality if you watch it closely. So I will go and try to persuade Tyndareus and the citizens to moderate their excessive anger against thee; for it is with them as with a ship; she dips if her sheet is hauled too taut, but rights herself again if it is let go.

Attempts to do too much are as keenly resented by the citizens as they are by the gods; and so it must be by cleverness, not by the force of superior numbers, I frankly tell thee, that I must try to save thee. No prowess of mine as perhaps thou fanciest, could do it; for, had it been so easy to triumph single-handed over the troubles that beset thee, I should never have tried to bring Argives over to the side of mercy; but, as it is, the wise find themselves forced to bow to fortune.[1] [*Exit* MENELAUS.

ORE. O thou that hast no use, save to head a host In a woman's cause! thou traitor in thy friends' defence! dost turn thy back on me? What Agamemnon did is all forgotten.

Ah, my father! thy friends, it seems, desert thee in adversity. Alas! I am betrayed; no longer have I any hope of finding a refuge where I may escape the death-sentence of Argos; for this man was my haven of safety.

Ha! a welcome sight, there comes Pylades, my best of friends, running hither from Phocis. A trusty comrade is a more cheering sight in trouble than a calm is to sailors.

PYL. On my way hither I traversed the town with more haste than I need have used, to find thee and thy sister,

[1] Dindorf condemns as spurious these three very difficult lines (ll. 714-716). For *οὐ γάρ* Kirchhoff plausibly suggests *οὔτἂν*, substituting *εἰ* for *οὐ* in line 712 on the hint of a Scholiast. This reading I have followed, Paley being of opinion that there is possible corruption in the common text. (Cf. his note *ad loc.*)

having heard or rather myself seen the citizens assembling,[1] under the belief that they intend your immediate execution. What is happening here? how is it with thee? how farest thou, my best of comrades, friends, and kin? for thou art all these to me.

ORE. Let one brief word declare to thee my evil case—it is "Ruin."

PYL. Include me then in it; for friends have all in common.

ORE. Menelaus is a traitor to me and my sister.

PYL. 'Tis only natural that the husband of a traitress should prove a traitor.

ORE. He no more repaid me when he came than if he had never come.

PYL. Has he really arrived then in this land?

ORE. He was a long time coming, but very soon detected for all that in treachery to his friends.

PYL. And did he bring his wife, that queen of traitresses, with him on his ship?

ORE. It was not he who brought her, but she him.

PYL. Where is she who proved the ruin of so many Achæans, though she was only a woman?

ORE. In my house; if, that is, I ought to call it mine.

PYL. And thou—what didst thou say to thy father's brother?

ORE. I besought him not to look on, while I and my sister were slain by the citizens.

PYL. By heaven! what said he to this? I fain would know.

ORE. Caution was the line he took—the usual policy of traitorous friends.

PYL. What excuse does he allege? when I have heard that, I know all.

[1] Line 730 is possibly not genuine, being omitted by some of the *Scholiasts*.

ORE. The worthy sire arrived, who begat those peerless daughters.

PYL. Thou meanest Tyndareus; he was angry with thee, perhaps, for his daughter's sake.

ORE. Thou hast it; and Menelaus preferred his relationship to my father's.

PYL. Had he not courage enough to share thy troubles, when he *did* come?

ORE. Not he; he never was a warrior, though a doughty knight amongst women.

PYL. Thy case is desperate, it seems, and thou must die.

ORE. The citizens are to give their vote about us on the question of the murder.

PYL. And what is that to decide? tell me, for I am alarmed.

ORE. Our life or death; so short the words that tell of things so long!

PYL. Leave the palace, then, with thy sister and fly.

ORE. Look! we are being watched by guards on every side.

PYL. I saw that the streets of the city were secured with armed men.

ORE. We are as closely beleaguered as a city by its foes.

PYL. Ask me also of my state; for I too am ruined.

ORE. By whom? this would be a further sorrow to add to mine.

PYL. Strophius, my father, in a fit of anger, hath banished me his halls.

ORE. On some private charge, or one in which the citizens share?

PYL. He says it is a crime to have helped thee slay thy mother.

ORE. Woe is me! it seems my troubles will cause thee grief as well.

PYL. I am not like Menelaus; this must be endured.

ORE. Art thou not afraid that Argos will desire thy death as well as mine?

PYL. I am not theirs to punish; I belong to Phocis.

ORE. A terrible thing is the mob, when it has villains to lead it.

PYL. Aye, but with honest leaders its counsels are honest.

ORE. Go to; we must consult together.

PYL. What is it we must consider?

ORE. Suppose I go and tell the citizens—

PYL. That thy action was just—

ORE. In avenging my father?

PYL. I am afraid they will be glad enough to catch thee.

ORE. Well, am I to crouch in fear and die without a word?

PYL. That were cowardly.

ORE. How then shall I act?

PYL. Suppose thou stay here, what means of safety hast thou?

ORE. None.

PYL. And if thou go away, is there any hope of escaping thy troubles?

ORE. There might be possibly.

PYL. Well, is not that better than staying?

ORE. Am I to go, then?

PYL. Yes; if thou *art* slain, there will be some honour in dying thus.

ORE. True; thus I escape cowardice.

PYL. Better than by staying.

ORE. After all, I can justify my action.

PYL. Pray[1] that this may be the only view they take.

ORE. Some one or two maybe will pity me—

[1] Reading τόδε δοκεῖν, Paley's emendation for τὸ or τῷ δοκεῖν. Nauck regards the whole of l. 783 as spurious, and incloses it in *brackets*.

PYL. Yes, thy noble birth is a great point.

ORE. Resenting my father's death.

PYL. That is all quite clear.

ORE. I must go, for to die ignobly is a coward's part.

PYL. Well said!

ORE. Shall we tell my sister?

PYL. God forbid!

ORE. True, there might be tears.

PYL. Would not that be a grave omen?

ORE. Yes, silence is manifestly the better course.

PYL. Thou wilt thus gain time.[1]

ORE. There is only one obstacle in my way,—

PYL. What fresh objection now?

ORE. I am afraid the goddesses will prevent me by madness.

PYL. Nay, but I will take care of thee.

ORE. A wretched task, to come in contact with a sick man.

PYL. That is not my view in thy case.

ORE. Beware of becoming a partner in my madness.

PYL. Let that pass!

ORE. Thou wilt not hesitate?

PYL. Not I; hesitation is a grave mischief amongst friends.

ORE. On then, pilot of my course!

PYL. A service I am glad to render.

ORE. And guide me to my father's tomb.

PYL. For what purpose?

ORE. That I may appeal to him to save me.

PYL. No doubt that is the proper way.

ORE. May I not even see my mother's grave!

PYL. No; she was an enemy. But hasten, supporting those limbs, so slow from sickness, on mine, that the decision

[1] *i.e.*, the time it would take to tell thy sister.

of Argos may not catch thee first; for I will carry thee through the town, careless of the mob and unabashed. For how shall I prove my friendship if not by helping thee in sore distress?

ORE. Ah! the old saying again, "Get friends, not relations only." For a man whose soul is knit with thine, though he is not of thy kin, is better worth owning as a friend than a whole host of relations.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

CHO. Long, long ago, by reason of an old misfortune to their house, the sons of Atreus saw the tide roll back from weal to woe, carrying with it their great prosperity and that prowess proudly vaunted through the length of Hellas and by the streams of Simois, on the day that strife found its way to the sons of Tantalus—that strife for a golden ram,[1] to end in bitter banqueting and the slaughter of high-born babes; and this is why a succession of murders committed by kinsmen never fails the twin Atridæ.

What seemed so right became so wrong, to cut a mother's skin with ruthless[2] hand and show the bloodstained sword to the sun's bright beams; and yet her guilty deed was a piece of frantic[3] wickedness and the folly of beings[4] demented. Hapless daughter of Tyndareus! in terror of death she screamed to him, "My son, this is a crime, thy bold attempt upon thy mother's life; do not, whilst honouring thy father, fasten on thyself an eternity of shame."

To stain the hand in a mother's blood! What affliction on earth surpasseth this? what calls for keener grief or pity? Oh! what an awful crime Agamemnon's son committed, ending

[1] For the legend, cf. note on Electra, l. 699.

[2] πυριγενεῖ παλάμᾳ explained by the Schol. by ἀπηνεῖ χειρί; so too Klotz; but Liddell and Scott render "a fire-born instrument," *i.e.*, a sword; and this is also Paley's view.

[3] μαινολίᾳ. So Porson and Hermann for μεγάλῃ.

[4] Possibly to be referred to Clytemnestra and Ægisthus.

in his raving madness, so that he is become a prey to the avenging fiends for the murder, darting distracted glances round him! O the wretch! to have seen a mother's bosom o'er her robe of golden woof, and yet make her his victim, in recompense for his father's sufferings!

ELE. Surely,[1] friends, my poor Orestes hath never left the house, mastered by the heaven-sent madness?

CHO. No; but he is gone to stand the trial appointed concerning his life before the Argive populace, in which it will be decided whether he and thou are to live or die.[2]

ELE. Oh! why did he do it? who persuaded him?[3]

CHO. Pylades; but this messenger, now close at hand, will no doubt tell us thy brother's fate at the trial.

MES. Woe is thee, unhappy daughter of our captain[4] Agamemnon, my lady Electra! hearken to the sad tidings I bring thee.

ELE. Alas! our fate is sealed; thy words show it; thou art clearly come with tidings of woe.[5]

MES. To-day have the folk decided by vote that thou and thy brother are to die, poor lady.

ELE. Alas! my expectations are realized; I have long feared this, and been wasting away in mourning for what was sure to happen. But come, old friend, describe the trial, and tell me what was said in the Argive assembly to condemn us and confirm our doom; is it stoning or the sword that is to cut short my existence? for I share my brother's misfortunes.

MES. I had just come from the country and was entering the gates, anxious to learn what was decided about thee and Orestes—for I was ever well-disposed to thy father, and it

[1] Reading *οὔ που* with Hermann.

[2] Kirchhoff rejects this line; in which opinion Paley concurs.

[3] A line is perhaps wanting after this to complete the distich.

[4] Line 852 is rejected by Paley.

[5] The majority of editors condemn line 856, which Paley defends.

was thy house that fed and reared me, poor, 'tis true, yet loyal in the service of friends—when lo! I saw a crowd streaming to their seats on yonder height, where 'tis said Danaus first gathered his people and settled them in new[1] homes, when he was paying the penalty to Ægyptus.[2] So, when I saw them thronging together, I asked a citizen, "What news in Argos? Have tidings of hostilities ruffled the city of Danaus?" But he replied, "Dost thou not see the man Orestes on his way to be tried for his life?" Then I beheld an unexpected sight, which I would I ne'er had seen—Pylades and thy brother approaching together; the one with his head sunken on his breast, weakened by sickness; the other like a brother in the way he shared his friend's sorrow, tending his complaint with constant care.

Now when the Argives were fully gathered, a herald rose and asked, "Who wishes to give his opinion whether Orestes is to be slain or not for the murder of his mother?" Then up stood Talthybius, who helped thy father sack the Phrygians' city. He adopted a trimming tone, a mere tool of those in power as he always is, expressing high admiration for thy father, but saying not a word for thy brother, urging his crooked sentiments in specious words,[3] to this effect; "it is not a good precedent he is establishing as regards parents," and all the while he had a pleasant look for the friends of Ægisthus. That is like the tribe of heralds; they always trip across to the lucky side; whoso hath influence in the city or a post in the government, he is the friend for them.[4] After him prince Diomedes made harangue; not

[1] I have ventured to translate καινὰς, not κοινὰς as the editors give it. The two words are so repeatedly confused in the MSS. that the alteration is no very bold one to suggest.

[2] Danaus, fearing the sons of his brother Ægyptus, fled from his kingdom in Libya and formed a new settlement at Argos.

[3] καλοῖς κακοὺς—Valckenaer conjectures καλῶς, Hartung καλοὺς κακοὺς, "words good and bad."

[4] *Dindorf* regards lines 895-897 as spurious.

death but exile was the punishment he would have had them inflict on thee and thy brother, and so keep clear of guilt. Some murmured their assent, saying his words were good, but others disapproved.

Next stood up a fellow, who cannot close his lips; one whose impudence is his strength; an Argive, but not of Argos;[1] an alien forced on us; confident in bluster and licensed ignorance, and plausible enough to involve his hearers in some mischief sooner or later; for when a man with a pleasing trick of speech, but of unsound principles, persuades the mob, it is a serious evil to the state; whereas all who give sound and sensible advice on all occasions, if not immediately useful to the state, yet prove so afterwards. And this is the light in which to regard a party leader; for the position is much the same [in the case of an orator and a man in office.][2] This fellow was for stoning thee and Orestes to death, but it was Tyndareus who kept suggesting arguments of this kind to him as he urged the death of both of you.[3]

Another then stood up, not fair to outward view perhaps but a brave man, rarely coming in contact with the town or the gatherings in the market-place; a yeoman, one of a class who form the only real support of our country; shrewd enough, and eager to grapple with the arguments; his character without a blemish, his walk in life beyond reproach.[4] He moved that they should crown Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, for showing his willingness to avenge a father in the blood of a wicked profligate who was preventing men from taking up arms and going on foreign service; "since,"

[1] Said to be Cleophon, the demagogue of Athens; he was of Thracian extraction.

[2] Kirchhoff thinks that the whole passage from line 907-913 is interpolated; Paley mentions this very probable view, which is adopted by Nauck, but only rejects line 913 as undoubtedly spurious.

[3] Line 916 is rejected by Weil, whom Nauck follows.

[4] *ἀνεπίλῃπτον*, var. lect. *ἀνεπίπλῃκτον*.

said he, "those, who remain behind, corrupt and seduce our wives left at home to keep house." To the better sort his words carried conviction; and no one rose to speak after him. So thy brother advanced and spoke. "Ye dwellers in the land of Inachus! [Pelasgians in ancient times, and later Danai,[1]] I helped you no less than my father when I slew my mother; for if the murder of men by women is to be sanctioned, then the sooner you die, the better for you; otherwise you must needs become the slaves of women; and that will be doing the very reverse of what ye should. As it is, she who betrayed my father's honour has met her death, but if ye take my life, as is proposed, the strictness of the law becomes relaxed, and the sooner every one of you is dead, the better; for it will[2] never be daring at any rate that they will lack." Yet, for all he seemed to speak so fair, he could not persuade the assembly; but that villain who spoke in favour of slaying thee and thy brother, gained his point by appealing to the mob.

Orestes, poor wretch, scarce prevailed on them to spare him death by stoning, promising to die by his own hand, and thou by thine, within the space of to-day; and Pylades is now bringing him from the conclave, weeping the while, and his friends bear him company, with tears and lamentation; so he cometh, a sad and piteous sight for thee to see. Make ready the sword, prepare the noose for thy neck, for thou must die; thy noble birth availed thee naught, nor Phœbus either from his seat on the tripod at Delphi; no! he was thy undoing. [*Exit* Messenger.

[Cho. Ah, hapless maid! How dumb thou art, thy face veiled and bent upon the ground, as if ere long to start on a course of lamentation and wailing!][3]

[1] Line 933 is generally regarded as spurious.

[2] τῆς γε, *alii* τῆσδε.

[3] These three lines were, says the Scholiast, omitted in some copies. *Kirchhoff* and Paley regard them as interpolated.

ELE. Land of Argos! I take up the dirge, doing bloody outrage on my cheek with pearly nail, and beating on my head, the meed of [Persephone [1]] that fair young goddess of the nether world. Let the land of the Cyclopes break forth into wailing for the sorrows of our house, laying the steel upon the head to crop it close. This is the piteous strain that goeth up for those who are doomed to perish, the chieftains once of Hellas.

Gone, gone and brought to naught is all the race of Pelops' sons! and with them the blessedness [2] that crowned their happy home of yore; the wrath of God gat hold on them and that cruel murdering vote which prevails among the citizens.

Woe to you! ye tribes of short-lived men, full of tears and born to suffering, see how fate runs counter to your hopes! All in time's long march receive in turn their several troubles; and man throughout his life can never rest.

Oh! to reach that rock which hangs suspended [3] midway 'twixt earth and heaven, that fragment from Olympus torn, which swings on chains of gold in ceaseless revolution, that I may utter my lament to Tantalus my forefather, who begat the ancestors of my house; these were witnesses of infatuate deeds when Pelops in four-horsed car drove winged steeds in hot pursuit along the sea, hurling the corpse of murdered Myrtilus [4] into the heaving deep, after his race near the foam-

[1] *Περσέφασσα*, probably a gloss on some word in the original reading, which it is now impossible to determine; perhaps, as Paley suggests, *ἀ καλὰ θεᾶς παῖς*.

[2] Reading with Musgrave *ζῆλος ὧν ποτ' οἴκοις*.

[3] Nauck regards a good deal in the next few lines as open to suspicion.

[4] Myrtilus, the charioteer of Œnomaus, king of Elis, betrayed his master; for which crime Pelops threw him into the Ægean sea. As he was drowning he cursed the house of Pelops; and his father Hermes (the son of Maia) by creating the golden lamb (cf. note, Electra l. 699) sowed dissension between the sons of Pelops and ruined their house.

flecked strand of Gerestus. From this came a woful curse upon my house, in the day that there appeared among the flocks of Atreus, breeder of horses, that baleful portent of a lamb with golden fleece, the creation of the son of Maia; for from it sprang a quarrel, which made the sun's winged steeds swerve from their course, turning[1] them by a westward track along the sky towards the single horse of Dawn; and Zeus diverted the career of the seven Pleiads into a new path; yea, and it is that banquet to which Thyestes gave his name, and the guilty love of Cretan Ærope, the treacherous wife, that is requiting those murders with others; but the crowning woe is come on me and on my sire by reason of the bitter destinies of our house.

CHO. See where thy brother comes, condemned to die, and with him Pylades, most loyal of friends, true as a brother, guiding the feeble steps of Orestes, as he paces carefully at his side.

ELE. Ah! brother mine, I weep to see thee stand before the tomb, face to face with the funeral pyre. Again that sigh escapes me; my senses leave me as I take my last fond look at thee.

ORE. Peace! an end to womanish lamenting! resign thyself to thy fate. True, 'tis a piteous end, but yet [we needs must bear the present.[2]]

ELE. How can I hold my peace, when we poor sufferers are no more to gaze upon the sun-god's light?

ORE. Oh! spare me *that* death![3] Enough that this unhappy wretch is already slain by Argives; forego our present sufferings.

ELE. Alas for thy young life, Orestes! alas for the untimely death o'ertaking it! Thou shouldst have begun to live just as thou art dying.

[1] *μεθαρμόσασα* is perhaps to be preferred to *προσαρμόσασα*.

[2] Line 1024 is regarded by most editors as an interpolation.

[3] *i.e.*, do not kill me with vain regrets.

ORE. Unman me not, I do adjure thee! bringing me to tears by the recollection [1] of my sorrows.

ELE. We are to die, and I cannot but bemoan our fate; for all men grieve to lose dear life.

ORE. This is the day appointed us; and we must fit the dangling noose about our necks or whet the sword for use.

ELE. Be thou my executioner, brother, that no Argive may insult the child [2] of Agamemnon and slay her.

ORE. Enough that I have a mother's blood upon me; thee I will not slay; but die by any self-inflicted death thou wilt.

ELE. Agreed; I will not be behind thee in using the sword; only I long to throw my arms about thy neck.

ORE. Enjoy that idle satisfaction, if embraces have any joy for those who are come so nigh to death.

ELE. Dear brother mine! bearer of a name that sounds most sweet in thy sister's ear,[3] partner in one soul with her!

ORE. Oh! thou wilt melt my heart. I long to give thee back a fond embrace; and why should such a wretch as I feel any shame henceforth? [*embracing* ELECTRA]. Heart to heart, O sister mine! how sweet to me this close embrace! In place of wedded joys, in place of babes, this greeting is all that is possible to us poor sufferers.[4]

ELE. Ah, would the self-same sword, if only it might be, could slay us both, and one coffin of cedar-wood receive us!

[1] Reading *ὑπομνήσει* as Musgrave suggested; Nauck adopts this correction.

[2] *γόνον* v. l. *δόμον*. Hermann edits *τὴν γόνον*.

[3] The meaning of the expression *ὄνομα τῆς σῆς ἀδελφῆς* is so doubtful that Nauck regards this distich as corrupt. I have followed the explanation offered by Klotz, in preference to that of Paley, as at any rate giving an intelligible meaning; but whether the Greek will bear such a rendering seems very far from certain.

[4] Kirchhoff rejects line 1051, but perhaps without sufficient reason.

ORE. That would be an end most sweet; but surely thou seest we are too destitute of friends to be allowed one tomb between us.

ELE. Did not that coward Menelaus, that traitor to my father's memory, even speak for thee, making an effort to save thy life?

ORE. He did not so much as show himself, but having his hopes centred on the throne he was more cautious than to attempt the rescue of relatives.

Ah! well, let us take care to quit ourselves gallantly and die as most befits the children of Agamemnon. I, for my part, will let this city see[1] my noble spirit when I plunge the sword to my heart, and thou, for thine, must imitate my brave example. Do thou, Pylades, stand umpire to our bloody feat, and, when we both are dead, lay out our bodies decently; then carry them to our father's grave and bury us there with him. Farewell now; I go to do the deed, as thou seest.

PYL. Stay a moment; there is first one point I have to blame thee for, if thou thinkest I care to live when thou art dead.

ORE. But why art thou called on to die with me?

PYL. Canst ask? What is life to me with thee my comrade gone?

ORE. Thou didst not slay thy mother, as I did to my sorrow.

PYL. At least I helped thee; and so I ought to suffer alike.

ORE. Surrender to thy father; and seek not to die with me. Thou hast still a city, while I no longer have; thou hast still thy father's home, and mighty stores of wealth; and though thou art disappointed in thy marriage with my poor sister, whom I betrothed to thee from a deep regard for thy fellowship, yet choose thee another bride and rear a family;

[1] Reading ἀποδείξω πόλει.

for the tie which bound us binds no more. Fare thee well, my comrade fondly called;[1] for us such faring cannot be, for thee perhaps; for we that are as dead are robbed of joy henceforth.

PYL. How far[2] thou art from grasping what I mean! Oh! may the fruitful earth, the radiant sky refuse to hold my blood, if ever I turn traitor and desert thee when I have cleared myself; for I not only shared in the murder, which I will not disown, but also schemed the whole plot for which thou art now paying the penalty; wherefore I ought also to die as much as thou or she; for I consider her, whose hand thou didst promise[3] me, as my wife. What specious tale shall I ever tell, when I reach Delphi, the citadel of Phocis? I who, before your misfortunes came, was so close a friend, but ceased to be, when thou wert unlucky. That must not be; no! this is my business too. But since we are to die, let us take counsel together that Menelaus may share our misfortune.

ORE. Best of friends! if only I could see this ere I die!

PYL. Hearken then, and defer awhile the fatal stroke.

ORE. I will wait in the hope of avenging me on my foe.

PYL. Hush! I have small confidence in women.

ORE. Have no fear of these; for they are our friends who are here.

PYL. Let us kill Helen, a bitter grief to Menelaus.

ORE. How? I am ready enough, if there is any chance of success.

PYL. With our swords; she is hiding in thy house.

ORE. Aye, that she is, and already she is putting her seal on everything.

PYL. She shall do so no more, after she is wedded to Hades.

[1] ὄνομα var. lect. ὄμμα.
[2] Reading ἦ πολύ.
[3] Reading ἧς λέχος κατῄνεσας.

ORE. Impossible! she has her barbarian attendants.

PYL. Barbarians indeed! I am not the man to fear any Phrygian.

ORE. Creatures only fit to look after mirrors and unguents!

PYL. What! has she brought Trojan effeminacy with her here?

ORE. So much so that Hellas is become too small for her to live in.

PYL. The race of slaves is no match for free-born men.

ORE. Well, if I can do this deed, I fear[1] not death twice over.

PYL. No, nor I either, if it is thee I am avenging.

ORE. Declare the matter and tell me what thou proposest.

PYL. We will enter the house on the pretence[2] of going to our death.

ORE. So far I follow thee, but not beyond.

PYL. We will begin bewailing our sufferings to her.

ORE. Aye, so that she will shed tears, although her heart is glad.

PYL. And[3] we shall then be in the same predicament as she.

ORE. How shall we proceed next in the enterprise?

PYL. We shall have swords concealed in our cloaks.

ORE. But, before attacking her, how are we to kill her attendants?

PYL. We will shut them up in different parts of the house.

ORE. And whoever refuses to be quiet, we must kill.

PYL. That done, our very deed shows us to what we must direct our efforts.

[1] Reading *οὐχ ἄζομαι*.

[2] Paley removes the comma after *δῦθεν*, constructing it with *ὡς*.

[3] *i.e.*, we shall be shedding tears outwardly, though inwardly rejoiced. —This is the Schol.'s interpretation. Paley thinks the *τότε* refers to the time when Helen had to beg her life of Menelaus, *i.e.*, "we shall be in *the* same plight as she was on that memorable occasion."

ORE. To Helen's slaughter; I understand that watch-word.

PYL. Thou hast it; now hear how sound my scheme is; if we had drawn the sword upon a woman of better morals, it would have been foul murder; but, as it is, she will be punished for the sake of all Hellas, whose sires she slew; while those whose children she destroyed, whose wives she widowed, will shout aloud for joy[1] and kindle the altars of the gods, invoking on our heads a thousand blessings, because we shed this wicked woman's blood; for after killing her, thy name shall no more be "the matricide," but, resigning that title, thou shalt succeed to a better and be called "the slayer of Helen the murderess." It can never, never be right that Menelaus should prosper, and thy father, thy sister and thou be put to death, and thy mother too—(but I pass that by, for it is not seemly to mention it);[2]—while he possesses thy home, though it was by Agamemnon's prowess that he recovered his wife. May I perish then, if I draw not my sword[3] upon her! But if after all we fail to compass Helen's death, we will fire the palace and die; for we will not fail to achieve one distinction, be it an honourable death or an honourable escape therefrom.

CHO. The daughter of Tyndareus, who has brought shame on her sex, has justly earned the hate of every woman.

ORE. Ah! there is nothing better than a trusty friend, neither wealth nor princely power; mere number is a senseless thing to set off against a noble friend. Such art thou, for thou didst not only devise the vengeance we took on Ægisthus, but didst stand by me at the gates of danger, and

[1] Paley removes the full stop usually placed after *ξυναόρων*.

[2] Line 1145 is rejected by Nauck.

[3] Line 1148—the reading is doubtful. Kirchhoff proposes *ἢν μὴ . . . σπασώμεθα*, which Nauck adopts. If the ordinary reading *εἰ . . . πάσω μέλαν* is genuine, the latter word would seem to be a mere 'epitheton ornans" of a drawn sword.

now again thou art offering me a means to punish my foes and dost not stand aloof thyself; but I will cease praising thee, for there is something wearisome even in being praised to excess. Now since in any case I must breathe my last, I would fain my death should do my foes some hurt, that I may requite with ruin those who betrayed me, and that they too who made me suffer may taste of sorrow. Lo! I am the son of that Agamemnon, who was counted worthy to rule Hellas, exerting no tyrant's power but yet possessed of almost god-like might; him will I not disgrace by submitting to die like a slave; no! my last breath shall be free and I will avenge me on Menelaus. For could we but secure one object [1] we should be lucky, if from some unexpected quarter a means of safety should arise and we be the slayers, not the slain; this is what I pray for; for this wish of mine is a pleasant dream to cheer the heart, without cost, by means of the tongue's winged utterances.[2]

ELE. Why, brother, I have it! a means of safety, first for thee, then for him, and thirdly for myself.

ORE. Divine providence, I suppose. But what use in suggesting that? seeing that I know the natural shrewdness of thy heart.

ELE. Hearken a moment; do thou (*to* PYLADES) likewise attend.

ORE. Say on; the prospect of hearing good news affords a certain pleasure.

ELE. Thou knowest Helen's daughter? of course thou must.

[1] ἐνὸς is variously interpreted (1) of being able to kill our enemies and escape ourselves. (Schol.) (2) as referring to Menelaus. (Paley, who also suggests *καί ποθεν* for *εἴ ποθεν*.)

[2] If the reading be genuine, the meaning apparently is, "though we fail, still it costs nothing to talk about what might have been, and it is *even* cheering."

ORE. Hermione, whom my own mother reared,—know her? yes.

ELE. She hath gone to Clytemnestra's grave.

ORE. With what intent? What hope art thou hinting at?

ELE. Her purpose was to pour a libation over the tomb of our mother.

ORE. Well, granting that, how does this which thou hast mentioned conduce to our safety?

ELE. Seize her as a hostage on her way back.

ORE. What good can thy suggested remedy do us three friends?

ELE. If, after Helen's slaughter, Menelaus does anything to thee or to Pylades and me,—for we three friends are wholly one,—say thou wilt slay Hermione; then draw thy sword and keep it at the maiden's throat. If Menelaus, when he sees Helen weltering in her blood,[1] tries to save thee to insure his daughter's life, allow him to take his child to his father's arms; but if he makes no effort to curb the angry outburst and leaves thee to die, then do thou plunge thy sword in his daughter's throat. Methinks, though he show[2] himself violent at first, he will gradually grow milder; for he is not naturally bold or brave. That is the tower of defence I have for us, and now my tale is told.

ORE. O thou that hast the spirit of a man, though thy body clearly shows thee a tender woman, how far more worthy thou to live than die! This, Pylades, is the peerless woman thou wilt lose to thy sorrow, or, shouldst thou live, wilt marry to thy joy!

PYL. Then may I live and may she be brought to the capital of Phocis with all the honours of a happy marriage![3]

ORE. How soon will Hermione return to the palace? All

[1] Line 1196 is perhaps an interpolation, as Nauck thinks.

[2] *παρῇ*. Nauck proposes *ῥυῇ*.

[3] Wecklein proposes *ὑμεναίοισι δεξιουμένην*.

else thou saidst was well, if only we are lucky in catching the villain's child.

ELE. I expect she is near the house already, for the time agrees exactly.[1]

ORE. 'Tis well. Plant thyself before the palace, Electra my sister, and await the maid's approach; keep watch in case any one, an ally maybe or my father's brother, forestal us by his entry, ere the bloody deed is completed; and then make a signal to be heard inside the house, either by beating on a panel of the door or calling to us within.

Let us enter now, Pylades, and arm ourselves for the final struggle, for thou art the comrade that sharest the enterprise with me.[2] Hearken! father, in thy home of darkest gloom! it is thy son Orestes who is calling thee to come to the rescue of the destitute; it is on thy account I am unjustly suffering woe, and it is by thy brother that I have been betrayed for practising justice; wherefore I would fain take and slay his wife; and do thou help us compass this.[3]

ELE. Oh! come, my father, come! if within the ground thou hearest the cry of thy children, who for thy sake are dying.

PYL. Hear my prayer too, Agamemnon, kinsman of my father,[4] and save thy children.

ORE. I slew my mother,—

PYL. I held the sword—

ELE. 'Twas I that urged them[5] on and set them free from fear—

ORE. All to succour thee, my sire.

[1] *i.e.*, she has been absent just the time I expected, and is probably now close at hand.

[2] Line 1224 is suspected by Hermann.

[3] Lines 1227-1230 are regarded by Nauck as spurious.

[4] According to the Schol., Strophius, the father of Pylades, had married Anaxibia, the sister of Agamemnon.

[5] *Reading* with Porson ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἐπεκέλευσα.

ELE. I proved no traitress either.

PYL. Wilt thou not hearken then to these reproaches and save thy children?

ORE. With tears I pour thee a libation.

ELE. And I with notes of woe.

PYL. Cease, and let us about our business. If prayers do really penetrate the ground, he hears. O Zeus, god of my fathers, O Justice, queen revered, vouchsafe us three success; three friends are we, but one the struggle, one the forfeit all must pay, to live or die.[1]

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

ELE. My own townswomen, of foremost rank in Argos, the home of the Pelasgi!

CHO. Mistress, why dost thou address us? for still this honoured name is left thee in the Danaid town.

ELE. Station yourselves, some here along the high road, others yonder on some other path, to watch the house.

CHO. But why dost thou summon me to this service? tell me, dear mistress.

ELE. I am afraid that some one, who is stationed at the house for a bloody purpose, may cause troubles, only to find them himself.

1ST HALF-CHO. Lead on; let us hasten; I will keep careful watch upon this track towards the east.

2ND HALF-CHO. And I on this, that leadeth westward. Throw a glance sideways, letting the eye range from point to point; then look back again.[2]

1ST HALF-CHO. We are directing them as thou biddest.

ELE. Cast your eyes around, let them peer[3] in every direction through your tresses.

[1] Line 1245 is regarded as spurious by Nauck.

[2] *εἶτα παλινσκοπίαν.* Porson's conjecture, afterwards confirmed by the best MS.

[3] Reading with Canter, *κόρας διάδοτε*, but the verse is not satisfactorily emended.

2ND HALF-CHO. Who is that on the road? Who is yonder countryman I see wandering round thy house?

ELE. Ah! friends, we are undone; he will at once reveal to our enemies the armed ambush of that lion-like pair.

1ST HALF-CHO. (*Reconnoitring.*) Calm thy fears; the road is not occupied, as thou thinkest, dear mistress.

ELE. (*Turning to the other watchers.*) And can I count thy side safe still? reassure me; is yonder space before the court-yard still deserted?

2ND HALF-CHO. All goes well here; look to thy own watch, for no Argive is approaching us.

1ST HALF-CHO. Thy report agrees with mine; there is no noise here either.

ELE. Well then, let me make myself heard in the gateway. (*Calling through the door.*) Why are ye within the house delaying to spill your victim's blood, now that all is quiet? They do not hear; ah, woe is me! Can it be that their swords have lost their edge at the sight of her beauty? Soon will some mail-clad Argive, hurrying to her rescue, attack the palace. Keep a better look-out; 'tis no time for sitting still; bestir yourselves, some here, some there.

CHO. My eye is ranging to and fro all along the road.

HEL. (*within.*) Help, Pelasgian Argos! I am being foully murdered.

1ST HALF-CHO. Heard ye that? Those men are now about the bloody deed.

2ND HALF-CHO. 'Tis Helen screaming, to hazard a guess.

ELE. Come, eternal might of Zeus, oh, come to help my friends!

HEL. (*within.*) Menelaus, I am being murdered, but thou, though near, affordest me no aid.

ELE. Cut, stab, and kill;[1] all eager for the fray dart out

[1] This verse is perhaps interpolated; the readings vary. For πίμπρη there is a var. lect. τείνετε; Hermann regards it as a gloss, and proposes to read φάσγαν' ἴσω χροὸς ἱέμενοι.

your swords, double-handed, double-edged, against the woman who left her father's home and husband's side, and did to death so many of the men of Hellas, slain beside the river-bank, where tears rained down beneath the iron darts all round Scamander's eddying tides.

CHO. Hush! hush! I caught the sound of a foot-fall on the road near the house.

ELE. Ladies, my dearest friends, it is Hermione advancing into the midst of the bloodshed. Let our clamour cease; on she comes headlong into the meshes of the net. Fair will the quarry prove if caught. Resume your station, looks composed and faces not betraying what has happened; and I too will wear a look of melancholy, as if forsooth I knew nothing of that desperate deed. (*Addressing* HERMIONE *as she approaches.*) Ah! maiden, hast thou come from wreathing Clytemnestra's grave and from pouring libations to the dead?

HER. Yes, I have returned after securing a gracious recognition; but I was filled with some alarm as to the import of a cry I heard in the palace as I was still at a distance.

ELE. But why? Our present lot gives cause for groans.

HER. Hush! What is thy news?

ELE. Argos has sentenced Orestes and myself to death.

HER. Kinsfolk of my own! God forbid!

ELE. It is decreed; the yoke of necessity is on our necks.

HER. Was this the reason then of the cry within?

ELE. Yes, 'twas the cry of the suppliant as he fell at Helen's knees.

HER. Who is he? I am none the wiser, if thou tell me not.

ELE. Orestes the hapless, entreating mercy for himself and me.

HER. Good reason then has the house to cry out.

ELE. What else would make a man entreat more earnestly? Come, throw thyself before thy mother in her proud prosperity, and join thy friends in beseeching Menelaus not to look on and see us die. O thou that wert nursed in the same mother's arms as I, have pity on us and relieve our pain. Come hither to the struggle, and I myself will be thy guide; for thou and thou alone, hast the issue of our safety in thy hands.

HER. Behold me hastening to the house; as far as rests with me, regard yourselves as safe. [*Exit* HERMIONE.

ELE. Now, friends, secure the prey in your armed ambush in the house.

HER. (*calling from within.*) Ah! who are these I see?

ORE. (*within.*) Silence! 'tis our safety, not thine, thou art here to insure.

ELE. Hold her hard and fast; point a sword at her throat; then wait in silence, that Menelaus may learn that they are men, not Phrygian cowards, whom he has found and treated as only cowards deserve.

CHO. What ho! my comrades, raise a din, a din and shouting before the house, that the murder done may not inspire the Argives with wild alarm, to make them bring aid to the royal palace, before I see for certain whether Helen's corpse [1] lies weltering in the house or hear the news from one of her attendants; for I know but a part of the tragedy, of the rest I am not sure. Thanks to Justice the wrath of God has come on Helen; for she filled all Hellas with tears because of her accursed paramour, Paris of Ida, who took our countrymen to Troy.

But hist! the bolts of the palace-doors rattle; be silent; for one of her Phrygians is coming out, from whom we will inquire of the state of matters within.

PHR. (*expressing the most abject terror.*) From death escaped, in my barbaric slippers have I fled away, away from

[1] φόνον—perhaps νεκρὸν should be read with Herwerden.

the Argive sword, escaping as best a barbarian might by clambering over the cedar beams that roof the porch and through the Doric triglyphs.[1] (O my country, my country!) Alack, alack! oh! whither can I fly, ye foreign dames, winging my way through the clear bright sky or over the sea, whose circle hornèd Ocean draws, as he girdles the world in his embrace?

CHO. What news, slave of Helen, creature from Ida?

PHR. Ah me for Ilium, for Ilium, the city of Phrygia, and for Ida's holy hill with fruitful soil! in foreign accents hear me raise a plaintive strain[2] over thee, whose ruin luckless Helen caused,—that lovely child whom Leda bore to a feathered swan, to be a curse to Apollo's towers of polished stone. Ah! well-a-day! woe to Dardania for the wailings wrung from it by the steeds that bought his minion Ganymede for Zeus.[3]

CHO. Tell us plainly exactly what happened in the house, [for[4] till now I have been guessing at what I do not clearly understand.]

[1] Apparently the spaces between the beams supporting the roof were not filled in, so that, if the slave had clambered on to one of these beams, he would have been able to creep through such an aperture and let himself down on the outside of the wall. (Cf. Iph. Taur. l. 113.)

[2] ἀρμάτειον ἀρμάτειον μέλος. Various attempts have been made to explain this phrase but without success. The Schol. says that some considered it a musical direction, without, however, being able to say what the direction was. Another Schol. suggests that it was a dirge similar to that sung over Hector's corpse when it was dragged behind the chariot (ἅρμα) of Achilles; and so equivalent to "plaintive." Hermann compares the phrase Καστόρειον μέλος, which was a martial measure, and therefore not very apposite. Such are a few of the vague surmises about this obscure phrase; for further suggestions cf. Paley's note *ad loc.*

[3] One legend was that Zeus obtained Ganymede from Tros his father by a gift of horses. The connection is not clear, and probably the allusions are intentionally vague in the mouth of the foreign slave.

[4] This verse was marked spurious by Kirchhoff, and is rejected by most editors.

PHR. "Ah, for Linus! woe is him!" that is what barbarians say in their eastern tongue as a prelude to the dirge of death,[1] whene'er royal blood is spilt upon the ground by deadly iron blades.

To tell thee exactly what happened; there came into the palace two lion-like men of Hellas, twins in nature; your famous chief was sire of one, 'twas said; the other was the son of Strophius; a crafty knave was he, like to Odysseus, subtle, silent, but staunch to his friends, daring enough for any valiant deed, versed in war and bloodthirsty as a serpent. Ruin seize him for his quiet plotting, the villain!

In they came, their eyes bedimmed with tears, and took their seats in all humility near the chair of the lady whom Paris the archer once wedded, one on this side, one on that, to right and left, with weapons on them; and both threw their suppliant arms round the knees of Helen; whereon her Phrygian servants started to their feet in wild alarm, each in his terror calling to his fellow, "Beware of treachery!" To some there seemed no cause, but others thought that the viper, who had slain his mother, was entangling the daughter of Tyndareus in the toils of his snare.

CHO. And where wert thou the while? fled long before in terror?

PHR. It happened that I, in Phrygian style, was wafting the breeze past Helen's curls with a round feather-fan, stationed before her face; and she[2] the while, as eastern ladies use, was twisting flax on her distaff with her fingers, but letting her yarn fall on the floor, for she was minded to embroider purple raiment as an offering from the Trojan spoils, a gift for Clytemnestra at her tomb.

[1] For *ἀρχὰν θανάτου* of the text Kirchhoff proposed *ἀρχᾶν θανάτῳ* "at the death of rulers"; an ingenious but unnecessary change.

[2] The punctuation of Klotz is here followed, *i.e.*, a stop after *φῶσων*, while for *ἁ δὲ* he reads *ἅδε*; thus, *βαρβάροις νόμοισιν ἅδε . . . .* This seems preferable to taking *νόμοις* in two distinct senses in the same sentence, as Paley suggests.

Then to the Spartan maid Orestes spake, "Daughter of Zeus, quit thy chair and cross the floor to a seat at the old altar of Pelops, our ancestor, to hear something I have to say." Therewith he led the way and she followed, little guessing his designs. Meantime his accomplice, the Phocian miscreant, was off on other business. "Out of my way![1] Well, Phrygians always were cowards." So he shut them up in different parts of the house, some in the stables, others in private chambers,[2] one here, one there, disposing of them severally at a distance from their mistress.

CHO. What happened next?

PHR. Mother of Ida, mighty parent! Oh! the murderous scenes and lawless wickedness that I witnessed in the royal palace! They[3] drew forth swords from under their purple cloaks, each darting his eye all round him in either direction to see that none was near, and then, like boars that range the hills, they stood at bay before her, crying, "Thou must die; it is thy craven husband that will slay thee, because he betrayed his brother's son to death in Argos." But she with piercing screams brought down her snow-white arm upon her bosom and loudly smote on her poor head; then turned her steps in flight, shod in her golden shoon; but Orestes, outstripping her slippered feet, clutched his fingers in her hair and bending back her neck on to her left shoulder was on the point of driving the grim steel into her throat.

CHO. Where were those Phrygians in the house to help her then?

PHR. With a loud cry we battered down the doors and doorposts of the rooms we had been penned in, by means of bars, and ran to her assistance from every direction, one arming himself with stones, another with javelins, a third

[1] Paley places the interrogation after ἴτε; making ἀλλ' ἀεὶ . . . a taunting remark of Pylades on the instant flight of the slaves.

[2] ἐξίδραισι. Schol. ἀποπάτοις.

[3] Paley inserts οἱ δ' before ἀμφί, on his own conjecture.

having a drawn sword; but Pylades came to meet us, all undaunted, like Hector of Troy or Aias triple-plumed, as I saw him on the threshold of Priam's palace; and we met point to point. But then it became most manifest how inferior we Phrygians were to the warriors of Hellas in martial prowess. There was one man flying, another slain, a third wounded, yet another craving mercy to stave off death; but we escaped under cover of the darkness; while some were falling, others staggering, and some laid low in death. And just as her unhappy mother sunk to the ground to die, came luckless Hermione to the palace; whereon those twain, like Bacchanals when they drop their wands and seize a mountain-cub, rushed and seized her; then turned again to the daughter of Zeus to slay her; but lo! she had vanished from the room, passing right through the house by magic spells or wizards' arts or heavenly fraud; O Zeus and earth, O day and night!

What happened afterwards I know not, for I stole out of the palace and ran away. So Menelaus went through all his toil and trouble to recover his wife Helen from Troy to no purpose.

CHO. Behold another strange sight succeeding its predecessors; I see Orestes sword in hand before the palace, advancing with excited steps.

ORE. Where is he who fled from the palace to escape my sword?

PHR. (*falling at the feet of* ORESTES.) Before thee I prostrate myself, O prince, and do obeisance in my foreign way.

ORE. 'Tis not Ilium that is now the scene, but the land of Argos.

PHR. No matter where, the wise love life more than death.

ORE. I suppose that shouting of thine was not for Menelaus to come to the rescue?

PHR. Oh no! it was to help thee I called out, for thou art more deserving.

ORE. Was it a just fate that overtook the daughter of Tyndareus?

PHR. Most just, though she had had three throats to die with.

ORE. Thy cowardice makes thee glib; these are not thy real sentiments.

PHR. Why, surely she deserved it for the havoc she made of Hellas as well as Troy?

ORE. Swear thou art not saying this to humour me, or I will slay thee.

PHR. By my life I swear,—an oath likely to be true in my case.

ORE. Did every Phrygian in Troy show the same terror of steel as thou dost?

PHR. Oh, take thy sword away! held so near it throws a horrid gleam of blood.

ORE. Art thou afraid of being turned to a stone, as if it were a Gorgon thou seest?

PHR. To a stone, no! but to a corpse; that Gorgon's head is not within my ken.

ORE. A slave, and so fearful of death, which will release thee from trouble!

PHR. Bond or free, every one is glad to gaze upon the light.

ORE. Well said! thy shrewdness saves thee; go within.

PHR. Thou wilt not kill me after all?

ORE. Thou art spared!

PHR. O gracious words!

ORE. Come, I shall change my mind—[1]

PHR. Ill-omened utterance!

ORE. Thou fool! dost think I could endure to plunge my

[1] An *aposiopesis*, *i.e.*, "unless you do as you are told."

sword in throat of thine, thou that neither art woman nor amongst men hast any place? The reason I left the palace was to gag thy noisy tongue; for Argos is quickly roused, once it hears a cry to the rescue. As for Menelaus, we are not afraid of measuring swords with him; no! he may go upon his way proud of the golden ringlets on his shoulders; for if, to avenge the slaying of Helen, he gathers the Argives and leads them against the palace, refusing to attempt the rescue of me, [my sister, and Pylades my fellow-conspirator,][1] he shall have two corpses to behold, his daughter's as well as his wife's. [*Exeunt* ORESTES *and the* Phrygian Slave.]

CHO.[2] Ah! fortune, fortune! again and yet again the house is entering on a fearful contest for the race of Atreus.

1ST HALF-CHO. What are we to do? carry tidings to the town, or hold our peace?

2ND HALF-CHO. It is safer to keep silence, friends.

1ST HALF-CHO. Look, look at that sudden rush of smoke to the sky in front of the palace, telling its tale in advance!

2ND HALF-CHO. They are kindling torches to fire the halls of Tantalus: they do not shrink even from murder.

CHO. God holds the issue in his hand, to give to mortal men what end he will. Some mighty power is his; it was through a vengeful fiend[3] that this family started on its career of murder, by reason of the hurling of Myrtilus from the chariot.[4]

But lo! I see Menelaus approaching the palace in hot haste; no doubt he has heard what is happening here.[5]

[1] Probably an interpolation.

[2] Editors arrange this antistrophe in different ways; Nauck's distribution of the lines is here followed.

[3] Reading with Seidler δι' ἀλαστόρ' ἔπεσ' ἔπεσε.

[4] cf. *supra*, l. 992. Pelops raced with Œnomaus for the hand of his daughter; and having detected Myrtilus, the charioteer of the latter, in an act of treachery, threw him into the sea.

[5] Regarded by Nauck as spurious.

(*Calling inside.*) What ho! within, descendants of Atreus, make haste and secure the doors with bars. A man in luck is a dangerous adversary for luckless wretches like thyself, Orestes. [ORESTES *and* PYLADES *appear on the roof, holding* HERMIONE.]

MEN. Strange news of violent deeds perpetrated by a pair of savages,—men I do not call them,—has brought me hither. What I heard was that my wife was not killed after all, but had vanished out of sight,—an idle rumour doubtless, brought to me by some dupe of his own terror; a ruse perhaps of the matricide to turn the laugh against me.

Throw wide the palace doors! My orders to my servants are that they force the doors, that I may rescue my child at any rate from the hands of the murderers and recover my poor wife's corpse, that dear partner whose slayers must die with her by my arm.[1]

ORE. (*from the roof.*) Ho, fellow! Keep thy fingers off those bolts, thou Menelaus, who vauntest thyself so high; else will I tear off the ancient parapet, the work of masons, and shatter thy skull with this coping-stone. The doors are bolted and barred, which will prevent thy entrance to the palace and thy eagerness to bring aid.

MEN. Ha! what now? I see a blaze of torches and men standing at bay on the house-top yonder, with a sword held at my daughter's throat.

ORE. Wouldst question me or hear me speak?

MEN. Neither; but I suppose I *must* hear thee.

ORE. Well, if thou art anxious to know, I intend to slay thy daughter.

MEN. After slaying Helen, art thou bent on adding another murder?

ORE. I would I had compassed that, instead of being duped by the gods!

[1] Lines 1564-6 read like an interpolation, as Paley remarks.

MEN. Dost thou deny having slain her, saying this out of wanton insult?[1]

ORE. Yes, I do deny it to my sorrow. Would God—

MEN. Would God—what? Thou provokest my fears.

ORE. I had hurled to Hades the pollution of Hellas!

MEN. Surrender my wife's dead body, that I may bury her.

ORE. Ask the gods for her; but thy daughter I will slay.

MEN. This matricide is bent on adding murder to murder.

ORE. This champion of his sire, betrayed by thee to death.

MEN. Art thou not content with the stain of the mother's blood which is on thee?[2]

ORE. I should not grow tired if I had these wicked women to slay for ever.

MEN. Art thou too, Pylades, a partner in this bloody work?

ORE. His silence says he is; so my saying it will suffice.

MEN. Not without thy ruing it, unless thou take wings and fly.

ORE. Fly we never will, but will fire the palace.

MEN. What! wilt thou destroy the home of thy ancestors?

ORE. To prevent thee getting it I will, offering this maid in sacrifice upon its flames.

MEN. Kill her, for thou wilt be punished by me for such a murder.

ORE. Agreed.

MEN. No, no! refrain![3]

ORE. Silence! thy sufferings are just; endure them.

MEN. Pray, is it just that thou shouldst live?

ORE. And rule a kingdom, yes.

MEN. A kingdom—where?

[1] Retaining the interrogation, which Paley omits.

[2] τὸ παρὸν, for which Markland suggested τὸ πάρος.

[3] Line 1598 is considered spurious by some editors.

ORE. Here in Pelasgian Argos.

MEN. Thou art so well qualified to handle sacred water!

ORE. And, pray, why not?

MEN. And to slay victims before battle!

ORE. Well, art thou?

MEN. Yes, my hands are clean.

ORE. But not thy heart.

MEN. Who would speak to thee?

ORE. Every man that loves his father.

MEN. And the man who honours his mother?

ORE. He's a happy man.

MEN. Thou didst not honour thine, at any rate.

ORE. No, for I delight not in your wicked women.

MEN. Remove that sword from my daughter's throat.

ORE. Thou art wrong.[1]

MEN. What! wilt slay her?

ORE. Right once more.

MEN. Ah me! what can I do?

ORE. Go to the Argives and persuade them—

MEN. To what?

ORE. Entreat the city that we may not die.

MEN. Otherwise, will ye slay my child?

ORE. That is the alternative.

MEN. Alas for thee, Helen!

ORE. And is it not "alas!" for me?

MEN. I brought her back from Troy only for thee to butcher.

ORE. Would I had!

MEN. After troubles innumerable.

ORE. Except where I was concerned.

MEN. Dreadful treatment mine!

ORE. The reason being thy refusal to help me then?[2]

[1] *i.e.*, in supposing I mean to do anything of the kind.

[2] *i.e.*, when I prayed for your aid. Cf. *supra*, l. 645.

MEN. Thou hast me there.

ORE. Thy own cowardice has. [*Calling from the roof to* ELECTRA.] Ho there! fire the palace from beneath, Electra; and, Pylades, my trusty friend, kindle the parapet of yonder walls. [*The palace is seen to be ablaze.*]

MEN. Help, help, ye Danai! gird on your harness and come, ye dwellers in knightly Argos! for here is a fellow trying to wrest his life[2] from your whole city, though he has caused pollution by shedding his mother's blood.

APO. (*Appearing in the clouds.*) Menelaus, calm thy excited mood; I am Phœbus, the son of Latona, who draw nigh to call thee by name, and thou no less, Orestes, who, sword in hand, art keeping guard on yonder maid, that thou mayst hear what I have come to say. Helen, whom all thy eagerness failed to destroy, when thou wert seeking to anger Menelaus, is here as ye see[3] in the enfolding air, rescued from death instead of slain by thee. 'Twas I that saved her and snatched her from beneath thy sword at the bidding of her father Zeus; for she his child must put on immortality, and take her place with Castor and Polydeuces in the bosom of the sky, a saviour to mariners. Choose thee then another bride and take her to thy home, for[4] the gods by means of Helen's loveliness embroiled Troy and Hellas, causing death thereby, that they might lighten mother Earth of the outrage done her by man's excessive population.[5] Such is Helen's end.

But as for thee, Orestes, thou must cross the frontier of

[1] Said to be a metaphor from wrestling.

[2] *βιάζεται πόλιν ζῆν*—so the Schol. explains this doubtful expression. Nauck reads *ζῇ δ'*.

[3] If this line (1631) is genuine, which some commentators doubt, Helen must also have been seen with Apollo in the clouds.

[4] The argument in full is, "you must choose another bride, for you can no longer have Helen, whom the gods are now taking to themselves in return for the use they made of her."

[5] *Lines 1641-2* are open to suspicion.

this land and dwell for one whole year on Parrhasian soil, which from thy flight thither shall be called the land of Orestes by Azanians and Arcadians;[1] and when thou returnest thence to the city of Athens, submit to be brought to trial by "the Avenging Three" for thy mother's murder, for the gods will be umpires between you and will pass a most righteous sentence on thee upon the hill of Ares, where thou art to win thy case. Likewise, it is ordained, Orestes, that thou shalt wed Hermione, at whose neck thou art pointing thy sword; Neoptolemus shall never marry her, though he thinks he will; for his death is fated to o'ertake him by a Delphian sword, when he claims satisfaction of me for the death of his father Achilles.[2] Bestow thy sister's hand on Pylades, to whom thou didst formerly[3] promise her; the life awaiting him henceforth is one of bliss.

Menelaus, leave Orestes to rule Argos; go thou and reign o'er Sparta, keeping it as the dowry of a wife, who till this day ne'er ceased exposing thee to toils innumerable. Between Orestes and the citizens, I, who forced his mother's murder on him, will bring about a reconciliation.

ORE. Hail to thee, prophetic Loxias, for these thy utterances! Thou art not a lying prophet after all, but a true seer; and yet there came a dreadful thought into my heart that it was some fiend I had listened to, when I seemed to hear thy voice; but all is ending well, and I obey thy word. There! I release Hermione from a violent death and agree to make her my wife whenever her father gives consent.

MEN. All hail, Helen, daughter of Zeus! I wish thee joy of thy home in heaven's happy courts.

[1] Lines 1646-7 contain some corruption; perhaps the latter of them is spurious; the word καλεῖν was replaced with πέδον by Valckenaer, which satisfies the sense. Porson suggested τεθήσεται for κεκλήσεται; Paley, γενήσεται.

[2] For the fate of Neoptolemus and the causes of it, cf. Androm. l. 1085, seq.

[3] ᾧ ποτ' ἤνεσας. Nauck reads ὡς κατήνεσας.

To thee, Orestes, I betroth my daughter according to the word of Phœbus, and good luck attend thee, a noble wooer nobly wived, and me the parent of thy bride!

APO. Repair each one of you to the place appointed by me; reconcile all strife.[1]

MEN. Obedience is a duty.

ORE. I think so too, Menelaus; so here I make a truce with sorrow and with thy oracles,[2] O Loxias.

APO. Go your ways, and honour Peace, most fair of goddesses; I, meantime, will escort Helen to the mansions of Zeus, soon as I reach the star-lit firmament. There, seated side by side with Hera and Hebe, the bride of Heracles, she shall be honoured by men with drink-offerings as a goddess for ever, sharing with those Zeus-born sons of Tyndareus their empire o'er the sea, for the good of mariners.

CHO. Hail! majestic Victory, still in thy keeping hold my life and ne'er withhold the crown!

[1] There is some doubt whether *νεῖκος*, *νείκους*, or *νείκας* should be read; each has some authority.

[2] *i.e.*, because I owed my sufferings to them.

IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURI.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

IPHIGENIA.
ORESTES.
PYLADES.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE WOMEN FROM HELLAS.
HERDSMAN.
THOAS, KING OF THE TAURI.
MESSENGER.
ATHENA.

SCENE.—On the sea-shore, in the Tauric Chersonese, near a temple of Artemis.

IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURI.

IPH. Pelops, the son of Tantalus, came to Pisa with swift steeds and won his bride, the daughter of Œnomaus, who bare Atreus to him; Atreus had issue Menelaus and Agamemnon; and I am Agamemnon's child, Iphigenia, by the daughter of Tyndareus, the maid whom 'tis thought my father offered to Artemis for the sake of Helen in the famous bay of Aulis, hard by the eddies which Euripus turneth ever to and fro before the changing breeze, as he rolls along his deep dark wave; for there it was that king Agamemnon gathered a fleet of a thousand ships from Hellas, wishing his Achæans to win the fair crown of victory over Ilium and avenge the outrage offered to Helen's marriage-vow, all for the sake of Menelaus. But when, owing to foul weather,[1] he could not get a favouring wind, he had recourse to the diviner's flame, and this was what Calchas told him: "O Agamemnon, captain of this host of Hellas, no chance hast thou of unmooring thy ships, till Artemis has received thy daughter Iphigenia in sacrifice; for thou didst vow to offer to the goddess of light the fairest thing the year produced. Now thy wife Clytemnestra has given birth to a daughter in thy house, whom thou must sacrifice," ascribing to me the title of "fairest"; and by the arts of Odysseus they took me from my mother's side, on the pretext of wedding me to Achilles; but, when I reached Aulis, I was seized, poor

[1] Reading δεινῇ δ' ἀπλοίᾳ πνευμάτων οὐ τυγχάνων, Jerram's correction of the MSS. δεινῆς τ' ἀπλοίας πνευμάτων τ'. Nauck's suggestion δεθεὶς δ' ἀπλοίᾳ is equally probable.

maid, and lifted high above the pyre; I saw the sword in act to strike, when Artemis stole me out of the Achæans' hands, leaving a hind in my place; and she carried me through the radiant air and set me to dwell here in the land of the Tauri, where a barbarian is king over barbarians, e'en Thoas, whose name is due to his fleetness, for swift as a bird on the wing he speeds his course. (He) made me priestess in the temple here; and this is why, in accordance with the observances of a festival in which the goddess Artemis delights, a festival fair only in name[1]—but I say no more from fear of that deity; for I sacrifice each son of Hellas who touches at these shores, this being the custom in the city even before I came; I begin the rite, but the awful act of slaughter belongs to others inside the shrine of the goddess.

Strange visions the past night brought me, which I will tell to the air, if there is really any help in that. As I slept, methought I had escaped this land and was once more in Argos, sleeping in the midst of my maidens, when lo! the surface of the ground was shaken by an earthquake; whereat I fled, and, standing outside the house, I saw its coping falling and the whole building dashed in ruin from roof to base. Only one column, methought, of my father's halls was left standing, and from its capital it let stream the auburn hair and took a human tongue; and I, observant of the murderous craft I practise against strangers, began sprinkling it, as it had been a victim, weeping the while.

Now this is my interpretation of the dream: Orestes is dead; 'twas for him I began the rites; for sons are the pillars of a house, and death is the lot of all whom once my lustral waters sprinkle. Again, I cannot fix the dream upon my friends, for Strophius had no son at the time I was called

[1] Kirchhoff says that this passage has suffered from corruption or the loss of some lines; but, regarded as an aposiopesis, no change is absolutely necessary. Weil thinks Ἄρτεμις is a gloss, and would read χρώμεσθ'.

to die.[1] Now therefore I mean to pour a drink-offering to my brother who is far from me here, for this I can do, with the help of the maidens from Hellas whom the king has given me as attendants. But wherefore are they not yet here? I will enter the courts of the goddess's temple, where I dwell. [*Exit* IPHIGENIA.

ORE. (*entering cautiously.*) Take care and see whether there is any one in the road.

PYL. I am doing so, keeping a careful look-out in every direction.

ORE. Thinkest thou, Pylades, this is the abode of the goddess towards which we steered our sea-borne barque from Argos?[2]

PYL. I think it is, Orestes; and thou must share my opinion.

ORE. And is that the altar, o'er which the blood of Hellenes trickles?

PYL. Its edges at any rate are discoloured with blood-stains.

ORE. Dost see a string of spoils just beneath the coping?

PYL. Aye, trophies of strangers who have been murdered.

ORE. Well, we must cast our eyes all round and keep a good look-out.

Ah, Phœbus! why have thy oracles brought me once more into this strait, after I had avenged the blood of my sire by slaying my mother? An exile from hearth and home, I was persecuted by relays of avenging fiends, completing many a lengthy course. So I went and questioned thee how to find an end to the whirling madness and distress I was enduring in ranging up and down through Hellas[3]; and thy answer was that I should seek the confines of the Taurian land, where Artemis thy sister has her

[1] Lines 59-60 are regarded by some editors as spurious after Monk.

[2] Line 70 is rejected by Badham as spurious.

[3] Probably an interpolation from line 1455.

altars, and take from thence an image of the goddess, which fell from heaven, so men say, into her temple there; then when I had secured it by craft or luck maybe, when every risk was run, I was to present it to the land of Athens. Beyond this naught was said; that done, I was to have relief from trouble. So in obedience to thy bidding I have come hither to a strange and cheerless shore.

Now, Pylades, as my partner in this hard emprise, I ask thee, what are we to do? for thou seest the height of these encircling walls. Shall we mount the steps leading to the building? how then[1] escape detection? or can we force the brazen bolts with levers, when we know nothing about them?[2] If we are caught trying to open the doors or plotting an entrance, we shall be slain; ere that let us escape upon our ship, wherein we sailed hither.

PYL. Flight is intolerable; we are not used to it; and the god's oracle must not be slighted; but let us quit the temple and hide ourselves in some cavern, washed by the sea's black tide, apart from our ship, lest some one see it and tell the rulers, and we be then seized by force. But when the eye of darksome night appears, we must e'en[3] dare to take the polished image from the shrine, bringing[4] all our craft to bear on it. Look there between the rafters, where an empty space is left by which to lower oneself. 'Tis well; the brave can face hardship, but cowards are never of any account. What! shall we, after toiling at the oar so long and far, turn back again and leave the goal?[5]

[1] Reading λάθοιμεν, Reiske's conjecture, and ἢ in the next line instead of Paley's μὴ.

[2] Badham's conjecture, adopted by Nauck, ὧδ' οὐδὸν ἔσιμεν is ingenious but not necessary.

[3] τοι—so the Aldine; though Hermann alters it to σοι, followed by Paley.

[4] προσφέροντε, so most of the copies.

[5] Lines 116-7 were assigned by Markland to Pylades, though the *MSS.* give them to Orestes. Dindorf rejects them as spurious.

ORE. Well said! obedience is my cue. We must find some spot where we can both hide ourselves out of sight; for assuredly the god will not be the cause of his own oracle falling fruitless to the ground; courage is all that is required, for the young have no excuse for shirking toil.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

CHO. Hush! a solemn silence! ye dwellers on the double clashing rocks that guard the Euxine sea!

All hail, Latona's child, Dictynna, goddess of the hills! to thy court I guide my steps in maiden saintliness, to thy gilded dome with beauteous colonnades, to wait on her that keeps thy keys in holy trust, bidding farewell for this to the embattled walls of Hellas, the land of horses, to Eurotas with its meadows 'mid the trees, where stood my father's house.

I am here; what news? why so thoughtful? wherefore hast thou summoned me to the temple? O daughter of him who sought the towers of Troy with the famous fleet of a thousand ships and their crews of countless warriors, gathered by the noble sons of Atreus![1]

IPH. My handmaids, ye find me busied with most woful dirges, dismal strains ne'er uttered by the Muse,[2] as I mourn a kinsman dead, ah me! for this is the trouble that has befallen me; I am weeping for my brother [reft of life],[3] so sure[4] the vision I beheld in the darkness of the night just past.

Undone! undone! Ah me! my father's house is now no more; our race is dead and gone. Woe! woe for the troubles in Argos! Out on thee, destiny! that robbest me

[1] Line 142 is corrupt. Conjectures are *σπέρμ' Ἀτρειδᾶν* (Schöne), *γένος Ἀτρειδᾶν* (Dindorf).

[2] Reading *εὐμούσου*.

[3] *ζωᾶς*, omitted by Elmsley as a gloss. Schöne suggests *ζωᾶς ἀπλακόνθ'*.

[4] Reading *τοίαν* with Elmsley and Dindorf.

of my only brother, sending him to Hades; for him I am about to pour this offering on the lap of earth, a cup for the departed dead,—milk of mountain-roving kine, a draught of Bacchus's own drink, and what the russet bees have garnered by their toil,—the soothing gift which custom gives the dead.

(*To a servant.*) Hand me the solid urn of gold, the death-god's drink-offering.

Scion of Agamemnon's line beneath the earth! to thee as dead I send these gifts; accept them thus, for I shall never bring thee at thy tomb my golden locks or tears; for very far I dwell from the land of our fathers, where men thought this luckless maiden died beneath the knife.

CHO. Lady, to thee will I now pour out an answering strain, an eastern dirge that wails in foreign key, a litany of woe,[1] chanted o'er the dead in mourning, a song of Hades' singing, wherein the pæan plays no part.

Woe for the royal house of the Atridæ! its light is quenched. Woe for their ancestral home! Who of all the prosperous kings in Argos shall rule o'er it? Trouble born of trouble darteth on it; and[2] the sun-god with winged careering steeds turned from his place and [changed][3] his light divine. Woe on woe, and death on death, with anguish unto anguish added, has come upon this house, all for a golden lamb; from this source vengeance[4] made its way into the family for those who were slain before of the race

[1] Retaining *μέλεον*, the old reading, for which however Paley adopts the conjecture *μελομέναν*.

[2] Reading with Jerram *δινευούσαις δ'* with a full stop at *ᾤσσει* and none after *πτανοῖς*, and omitting *δ'* after *ἀλλάξας*.

[3] The lacuna after *ἱερὸν* was supplied by Wecklein with *μετέβασ'* from the similar passage in Electra, l. 727. Cf. note *ad loc.* for the legend of "the golden lamb."

[4] Transposing thus with Wecklein *ἐκβαίνει ποινὰ Ταντ*αλιδᾶν. Hartung reads *ποίναμ'*.

of Tantalus; while against thee Fate is eager in the pursuit of mischief.

IPH. Bitter to me from the very first the fate of my mother's marriage; from the first on that night I was conceived,[1] the goddesses, who rule men's destiny, strove to make my childhood hard. I was the first fair babe she bore in her marriage-bower, that hapless daughter of Leda [whom all Hellas wooed,][2] born and reared by her to be the victim of my father's despite, a joyless offering, when,[3] to pay his vow, they brought me in a chariot drawn by steeds and set me on the strand of Aulis to be the bride,—ah! bride of sorrow,—to the Nereid's son.[4] But now beside the ruthless sea I make my cheerless home, an alien, torn from home and friends, with none to call me wife or mother; never singing Hera's praise, my queen in Argos, nor 'mid the merry whirr of looms broidering with the shuttle a picture of Athenian Pallas and the Titans, but staining altars instead with the streaming blood of doomed strangers, whose moans and tears are piteous, no theme for minstrel's lyre. Of them I am not thinking now, but I weep for my brother, dead in Argos, even for Orestes the heir to the Argive throne, whom I left a babe unweaned, an infant in his mother's arms, still hanging at her breast.

CHO. Behold, a herdsman is come from the beach to bring thee tidings.

HER. Daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra! hearken to the news I have to tell.

[1] Reading λοχίας with Bothe and Badham. Jerram and Nauck place a stop after κεινας, not after ζώνας.

[2] Scaliger and Hermann propose to place this line after l. 220; it seems to be out of place here; perhaps Badham is right in transposing lines 208-9.

[3] Reading with Hermann ἔτρεφεν, εὖτ' εὐκταίαν . . . ἐπέβασαν.

[4] *i.e.*, Achilles, to whom it was pretended Iphigenia was to be married.

IPH. Why, what is here to interrupt our present conversation?[1]

HER. Two youths, escaping on a ship, have reached the misty coast of the Symplegades, a grateful sacrifice for thee to offer to the goddess Artemis. Haste then to make all ready, the lustral water and the opening rites.

IPH. Whence come they? what is the name of these strangers' country?

HER. They are from Hellas; that is all I know, nothing further.

IPH. Didst thou not even catch the strangers' names, so that thou canst tell me?

HER. Pylades one called the other.

IPH. And the stranger's comrade, what was his name?

HER. That no one knows; for we never heard it.

IPH. Where were ye, when ye saw and captured them?

HER. Upon the extreme edge of the cheerless sea.

IPH. Pray, what were herdsmen doing by the sea?

HER. We had gone to wash our cattle in its briny spray.

IPH. Return to that other point; where did ye take them, and how? for this is what I wish to know.

'Tis long since strangers came, and our goddess's altar has not been crimsoned all that while[2] with streams of Hellene blood.

HER. We were just driving our cattle from their woodland pastures to yonder sea which flows between "the Clashing Rocks," where is a certain hollow cleft, scooped by the rush of the tide, a shelter used by purple-fishers, when a herdsman of our company saw two young men, and, coming back to us on tiptoe, he said, "Do ye not see them? there are

[1] Or, "but what is there in the present report that scares thee so?" (Paley.)

[2] Nauck reads ἐξ ὅτου after Seidler for the MSS. οὐδέπω, but the *change* does not seem absolutely necessary.

deities seated yonder." Then one of us, a god-fearing man, lifted up his hands and, looking towards them, prayed thus; "Lord Palæmon, son of the nymph Leucothea, in whose keeping are all ships, have mercy on us [whether ye twain now seated on the beach are "the Twin Brethren" or darlings of father Nereus, who begot that lovely choir of fifty Nereids."

But another, with a reckless disregard of what is right, scoffed at his prayers, and would have it that they were shipwrecked mariners sheltering in the gully for fear of our custom, having heard how we sacrifice strangers in this land.

Now most of us, thinking he was right, determined to hunt them for the goddess, victims such as our country offers. Meantime one of the two strangers, leaving the rocky cave, suddenly stood still and fell to shaking his head wildly up and down and groaning loudly, trembling to his very finger-tips in a frenzied fit, and shouting like a hunter, "There! Pylades, dost see her? there! dost see her now, the hellish snake, how eager she is for my blood, with her fearsome vipers all agape to bite me? and yet a third,[1] who belches fire and death, wings her way to a rocky height[2] with my mother in her arms, to hurl her thence upon me. Oh, horror! she will kill me; where am I to fly?"

We could not see these weird shapes, but he mistook the lowing of cows and the barking of dogs for the sounds which he said[3] the fiends were uttering in imitation of them. Now we were sitting huddled together in silence, as doomed men, when lo! he drew his sword, and, rushing like a lion

[1] Reading Kirchhoff's conjecture ἡ δ' ἐκ τρίτων αὖ for the MSS. ἐκ χιτώνων. Numerous other emendations have been proposed, but none are convincing.

[2] Placing a comma at ὄχθον with Hermann; otherwise ὄχθον might stand in apposition to μητέρα.

[3] Reading ἃ 'φασκ', Badham's correction of ἃ or ἃς φάσ'.

into the midst of the heifers, fell to slashing at their flanks and plunging his sword in their sides, thinking he was thus warding off the vengeful goddesses, so that the surface of the sea broke out in clots of gore. We meantime, seeing our cattle harried and slain, began to arm us, one and all, blowing the while on curved shells and calling the people of the place together, and very soon we were gathered in full force; but then the stranger left his sudden fit, and, foaming at the mouth, he falls; we, seeing him fallen so opportunely, set-to, each man of us, to hurl and smite at him, but the other of that pair wiped the foam from his lips and was careful of his body, holding out his finely-woven robe to cover him, watching anxiously for threatened wounds and ministering to his friend most tenderly. Suddenly the madman recovering his senses sprang up from where he fell and was ware of the surging press of foes and of the nearness of that calamity which is upon them now, and he gave one groan, but we the while ne'er ceased pelting them from every side with right goodwill; whereon we heard this fearful order given, "Pylades, we have to die; see that it be with honour; draw thy sword and follow me."

But when we saw the brandished blades of our two enemies, we took to flight and were filling the rocky glens; still, if one or two did fly, the rest kept up a vigorous fire at them, and if perchance they drove these off, the party, which was giving way at first, set-to stoning them again. This sounds incredible, but not a man of all the crowd that threw succeeded in hitting the goddess's victims. At last however we mastered them—not by bravery, 'tis true—but, surrounding them completely, we contrived to knock the swords from their hands with stones, and they sank to the ground through fatigue; at once we bring them to our monarch, who no sooner sees them than he despatches them to thee to purify and sacrifice. Be thy prayer, maiden, that *such* strangers may be forthcoming for thy offering; go on

slaying men like these, and Hellas will make atonement for thy own blood, expiating that sacrifice in Aulis.[1]

CHO. A strange story thou tellest about this waif, whoever he is, that is come from the land of Hellas to the cheerless sea.

IPH. Enough! go, bring the strangers hither; while I will see to what is needed here.[2] [*Exit* HERDSMAN.

Alas, my suffering heart! in days gone by thou wert always kind and compassionate towards strangers, paying their kindred race the tribute of a tear, whenever thou hadst Hellenes in thy power; but now, by reason of dreams which have made me cruel from thinking that Orestes is no longer alive,[3] ye will find my heart hardened, whoe'er ye are that have arrived. So then this also is a true saying, friends, and I experience it; "The unfortunate, having once known prosperity[4] themselves, bear no kind feelings towards their luckier neighbours."

No breeze from Zeus hath ever blown, nor vessel sailed, which might have carried Helen hither from her course between "the clashing rocks,"—Helen, my bane, and Menelaus with her,—that so I might have taken vengeance on them, putting Aulis here to balance Aulis there, where[5] Danaid chiefs with brutal violence were for slaughtering me like a heifer, my own father being the priest.

Oh! I can never forget that hideous scene, the many times I strained my hands to touch his beard, and how I clung to my father's knees and cried, "'Tis to a sorry wedding I am brought by thee, my sire; e'en now while thou art slaying

[1] Line 339 is inclosed by Nauck in brackets as suspicious.
[2] Reading with Badham *φροντιοῦμεν οἷα χρή*.
[3] Nauck rejects line 349 as interpolated.
[4] Reading *καλῶς πράξαντες* with Seidler.
[5] Reading *οὗ* with Pierson, a change adopted by most editors.
[6] Reading *νῦν* with Heath, Tyrrwhitt, and Reiske. The latter also reads *ἐμέ* for *ἐμή* in line 365.

me, my mother and the Argive maids are singing my marriage-hymn, and our house is filled with music; but I am dying all the time, slain by thee. Hades, it seems, and not the son of Peleus was the Achilles thou didst offer[1] me as lord, having brought me in thy chariot to a bloody wedding by a trick." A fine-spun veil was o'er my eyes, so I never took my brother in my arms—that brother now no more—nor kissed my sister on the lips from modesty, as if it were for Peleus' halls that I was bound; but many a fond caress I kept in store for the future, believing I should yet return to Argos.

Ah! Orestes, woe is thee! if thou art dead; from what a glorious lot and envied heritage art thou cut off! I blame these subtle quibbles of our goddess; say a man has spilt another's blood or even come in contact with a labouring woman or a corpse,[2] she bars him from her altars, counting him unclean, and yet herself delights in human sacrifice. It cannot be that Leto, bride of Zeus, ever bore[3] so senseless a daughter. No! for my part I put no credit in that banquet served by Tantalus to the gods, to believe that they felt pleasure in devouring a child; rather I suspect that the natives of this land, being cannibals themselves, impute this failing to their deity; for I cannot believe that any god is such a sinner.

CHO. Ye dim dark rocks where meet the seas, o'er whose forbidding billows Io[4] crossed, driven from Argos by the winged gad-fly, passing from Europe to the strand of Asia! who can these be that left the fair waters of Eurotas, with green beds of reeds, or Dirce's holy streams, to tread this

[1] Reading προτείνας, Badham's correction of προσείπας.

[2] Line 382 is rejected by Badham, whom Nauck follows.

[3] Reading ἔτικτεν with Porson for MSS. ἔτεκεν ἂν, which however Hartung defends.

[4] Ἰοῦς was inserted by Erfurdt after διεπέρασεν to complete the metre, and his conjecture has been adopted by Hermann and others.

savage soil, where the daughter of Zeus[1] bedews her altars and columned fanes with blood of men? Can they have sped[2] a chariot of the deep across the waves with oars of pine, dashed in on either side, before the breeze that fills the sail, heaping up riches for their homes in eager rivalry? for hope, fond hope, appears to man's undoing, insatiate[3] in the hearts of those who carry home a load of wealth, wanderers they across the main, visitors to foreign towns in idle[4] expectation. Some there are whose thoughts of wealth are not timed right, and some who find it come to them.

How did they pass those clashing rocks or the restless beach of Phineus, racing along the sea-beat strand o'er the breakers of Ocean's queen, before the breeze that filled their sails, to the land where choirs of fifty Nereid maids circle in the dance and sing,—the rudder steady at the stern and whistling to the breath of south-west wind or zephyr, on to that gleaming strand, where fowls in plenty roost, to the fair race-course of Achilles along the cheerless sea?

Oh! that chance would bring Helen, the darling child of Leda, hither on her way from Troy-town, as my lady prayed, that she might have the fatal water sprinkled round her hair and die by my mistress's knife, paying to her a proper recompense!

What joy to hear the welcome news that some mariner from Hellas had landed here, to end the sufferings of my bitter bondage! Oh! to set foot,[5] if only in a dream, in my

[1] Reading *κούρα Διὸς τέγγει* with Monk. Elmsley reads *κούρᾳ δίᾳ*.

[2] Either Rauchenstein's *ἔπεμψαν* or Dindorf's *πόρευσαν* seems preferable to *ἔπλευσαν* which involves a very harsh extension of the cognate accusative.

[3] *ἄπληστος*, without a stop at *βροτῶν*. Paley adopts Elmsley's reading *βροτῶν· ἄπληστον*.

[4] *κενᾷ*.

[5] Reading with Hermann *ὀνείροις ἐπιβαίην*, and *ὕπνων ἀπόλαυσιν* in line 454; but the passage is corrupt and obscure, and none of the present emendations can be considered very satisfactory.

father's home and city, a luxury sweet sleep affords, a pleasure shared by us with wealth!

But see where the prisoners twain[1] approach, their hands fast bound with chains, new victims for our goddess. Silence now, my friends! for those choice offerings from Hellas are now close to the temple, and it was no false news the herdsman announced.

Thou awful queen! if by such acts this city wins thy favour, accept its sacrifice, not sanctioned by Hellenes, though openly offered by our custom.

IPH. Ah, well! my first thought must be the due performance of the goddess's service.

Loose the hands of the strangers; they are now devoted and must not be chained: then enter the temple and make ready, whatever present need requires or custom ordains.

(*Turning to the prisoners.*) Ah! who was the mother that bare you? your father, who was he? or your sister, if haply ye had one? of what a gallant pair of brothers will she be bereft! Who knows on whom such strokes of fate will fall? for all that Heaven decrees, proceeds unseen, and no man knoweth of the ills in store; for Fate misleads us into doubtful paths.

Whence come ye, hapless strangers? for long as ye have been in sailing hither, so shall ye be long absent from your homes, aye for ever in that world below.

ORE. Woman, whoe'er thou art, why weep'st thou thus, or why distress us at the thought of our impending doom? No wise man I count him, who, when death looms near, attempts to quell its terrors by piteous laments, [nor yet the man who bewails the Death-god's arrival],[2] when he has no hope of rescue; for he makes two evils out of one; he lets

[1] Reading δίδυμοι with Markland.

[2] Line 486 is rejected by Reiske and Monk, whom many editors follow; Paley retains and defends it, but his reasons are scarcely convincing.

himself be called a fool and all the same he dies; he should let his fortune be. Weep not thou for us, for well we know what rites are offered here.

IPH. Which of you bears the name of Pylades, as they called it here? This is what I wish to learn first.

ORE. This is he, if the knowledge really gives thee any pleasure.

IPH. What state in Hellas calls him son?

ORE. What canst thou gain by learning this, lady?

IPH. Are ye brothers, the sons of one mother?

ORE. Brothers in friendship, not in blood.[1]

IPH. What name did the author of thy being give thee?

ORE. I might with justice be called "Misfortune."

IPH. That is not what I ask; refer that to chance.

ORE. If I die nameless, I shall not be mocked.

IPH. Why grudge me this? Art so exceeding proud?

ORE. 'Tis my body, not my name, that thou wilt sacrifice.

IPH. Wilt thou not even tell me the name of thy city?

ORE. No, for thy inquiry boots me not, seeing I am doomed to die.

IPH. What hinders thee from granting me this boon?

ORE. Glorious Argos is my home; I own it with pride.

IPH. What! Argos? wert thou really born there, sir stranger?

ORE. Aye, in Mycenæ, so prosperous of yore.

IPH. Was it as an exile or from what mischance that thou didst quit thy country?

ORE. An exile I am in a certain sense, not of my own free will, nor yet against it.

IPH.[2] And yet thy coming from Argos was welcome to me.

[1] Reading *γένει* with Köchly for MSS. *γύναι*.

[2] Lines 515-16 were transposed by Badham before l. 513, an arrangement approved and followed by Paley.

ORE. Not so to myself, but if thou art pleased, see to that thyself.[1]

IPH. Wilt tell me something that I wish to learn myself?

ORE. To serve as an appendix to my misery!

IPH. Maybe thou hast some knowledge of Troy, which is spoken of everywhere.

ORE. Would God I knew it not so much as in a dream!

IPH. They say that it is now no more, a city sacked.

ORE. Why, so it is; ye heard aright.

IPH. Did Helen return to the house of Menelaus?

ORE. Aye, that she did, to the sorrow of one I loved.

IPH. Where is she now? I too owe her a grudge.

ORE. She is living in Sparta with her first husband.

IPH. O creature hateful in the eyes of Hellenes, not in mine alone!

ORE. I too have reaped some fruit of that woman's marriages.

IPH. Did the Achæans make good their return, as 'tis rumoured?

ORE. Thy question embraces everything at once.

IPH. I would fain get an answer to it before thy death.

ORE. Put thy questions, since thou art bent on it; I will answer.

IPH. There was a seer Calchas,—did he return from Troy?

ORE. He was reported dead in Mycenæ.

IPH. Great queen! how well deserved! What of Laertes' son?

ORE. He has not yet returned, but 'tis said he is still alive.

IPH. Perdition seize him! ne'er may he reach home again!

ORE. Spare thy curses; dire affliction is his lot.

IPH. Is the son of Thetis the Nereid still living?

[1] Reading σὺ τοῦθ' ὅρα.

ORE. No, dead; his marriage at Aulis came to naught.

IPH. Aye, 'twas all a trick; at least they, who suffered by it, say so.

ORE. Why, who art thou? thy questions touching Hellas are so apt.

IPH. I am from Hellas; but, when a child, I lost that home.[1]

ORE. Then art thou right, lady, to long for news of it.

IPH. What of that general, whom men style "the blest"?

ORE. Who is that? The man of whom *I* wot is not among the blest.

IPH. A prince called Agamemnon, said to be the son of Atreus.

ORE. I knew him not; leave this theme, lady.

IPH. I do entreat thee, no! but speak, fair sir, to gladden me.

ORE. He is dead, poor king! and has caused another's death as well.

IPH. Dead? why, what befell him? woe is me!

ORE. Why that heavy sigh? Was he related to thee?

IPH. 'Tis for his former prosperity I grieve.

ORE. And rightly too, for he came to a fearful end at a woman's hands.

IPH. O the piteous fate of that murderess and her victim!

ORE. Prithee, cease and ask no more.

IPH. Only this; is the wretched victim's wife alive?

ORE. No, dead; her son,—the child she bore,—he slew her.

IPH. O house sore troubled! What could be his object?

ORE. Vengeance on her[2] for his father's death.

[1] *ἀπωλόμην*. Badham proposes *ἀπψχόμην*.

[2] *τήνδε* is suspicious here. Elmsley reads *αἷμα*, which is adopted by Dindorf and Nauck.

IPH. Alas for him! how well he exacted his evil justice.

ORE. Spite of his justice, he has no luck at Heaven's hand.

IPH. Did Agamemnon leave any other issue in his halls?

ORE. Yes, one maiden child, Electra.

IPH. What! is no mention made of a daughter who was sacrificed?

ORE. No, none, except that she has closed her eyes upon the light.

IPH. Ah, woe is her and him that slew her, her own sire!

ORE. In a thankless cause she died,—the cause of a wicked woman.

IPH. Is the son of the murdered man still alive at Argos?

ORE. Alive he is, unhappy wretch, and wandering without a home.

IPH. Begone, ye lying dreams, proved worthless after all!

ORE. Even the gods, who at least bear the title of wise, prove no less false than flitting dreams; in things divine as well as human, confusion reigns; and 'tis only one cause of grief, when a man, through no folly of his own but from obeying the dictates of prophets, is ruined, as ruined he is in the judgment of those who know.

CHO. Ah, well-a-day! and what is the fate of our dear[2] fathers? are they still alive, or dead? who can tell?

IPH. Listen, sirs, for I have hit upon a plan, I think, to further your interests and my own at the same time; and

[1] Reading ἓν δὲ λυπεῖται μόνον, ὅτ' οὐκ. But the passage is corrupt; λείπεται is a correction found in one MS., adopted by Badham, *i.e.*, "one thing is left to complete his misery;" but as Paley says, "possibly λείπεται arose from the marginal note of a transcriber (λείπει), indicating that something was wanting in the MS. he used." Monk and Kirchhoff mark a lacuna after l. 573, and this is probably the right solution. ὅτ' is a correction by Bothe of ὅ τ'.

[2] Reading ἡμῖν οἱ φίλοι, Köchly's correction of ἡμεῖς οἵ τ' ἐμοί.

this is the best guarantee of success, if all approve the same object. Wouldst thou, were I to spare thee, return to Argos for me with a message to my friends there, and carry them a letter, written by a captive out of pity for me; for he regarded not mine as the hand that slew him, but held our custom answerable for his death, such being the view our goddess takes of justice? For[1] I had no one to return to Argos with my message and convey my letter to some friend of mine, if spared; but as thou seemest to be a man of no mean breeding and knowest Mycenæ and the persons I mean, accept thyself[2] the means of rescue, earning a noble wage,—thy safety for a scrap of writing; but thy friend must be parted from thee and offered to the goddess, for this is our city's stern decree.

ORE. A fair proposal, lady stranger, save in one respect. That he should have to bleed is a heavy weight upon my heart; for 'tis I who steer this troubled craft; he but sails with me to save my toil. Wherefore it is not right that I should pleasure thee on terms that seal his doom, while I escape myself from trouble. No! be this the way; give him the letter; for he will convey it to Argos, and so thy end is served; but let who will slay me. Foul shame were it for a man to plunge his friends into trouble and escape himself; and this man is a friend, whose life I prize as highly as my own.

IPH. Heroic spirit! what a noble stock was thine! how true thou art to friends! Oh, may the last survivor of my race prove such another! for I, too, sirs, am not left brotherless; only I see him not.

[1] Lines 588-90 are regarded as spurious by Monk and Dindorf. Of the many proposed emendations I have followed Markland in reading *ἀγγεῖλαι* for *ἀγγεῖλαί*, and Elmsley in adding *τ'* after *τάς*. Paley retains the lines but thinks they may have been tampered with by grammarians.

[2] Reading *σώθητι καὶ σὺ* without a stop, the *καὶ* emphasizing *σὺ*.

This being thy wish, I will send him to carry the letter, and thou shalt die; but thy goodwill towards him must be something great![1]

ORE. But who will offer me and dare that awful deed?

IPH. Myself; for this[2] is the office I hold of the goddess.

ORE. A sad unenviable task, fair maid.

IPH. But I am the slave of necessity, whose law I must observe.

ORE. Is this the hand,—this woman's hand,—that draws the knife on men?

IPH. Not that, but round thy brow I shall sprinkle lustral water.

ORE. Who gives the fatal blow? if I may ask thee this.

IPH. Inside this building are men, whose office this is.

ORE. What kind of tomb will await me, when I am dead?

IPH. The sacred fire within and a gaping chasm in the rock.

ORE. Ah! would that a sister's hand could lay me out!

IPH. An idle prayer, poor wretch! whoever thou art, for her home lies far from this savage shore. Still, as thou art an Argive, I will not let thee want for aught that is in my power; I will place in thy grave good store of ornament and quench thy charred remains with yellow olive oil and will pour upon thy pyre the nectar sucked from many a flower by russet mountain bees.

I go now to fetch my letter from the goddess's temple; yet regard not this ill-will as mine.

Watch them, guards, without binding them. It may be I shall send unlooked-for tidings to a friend in Argos, even to him whom most I love, and the letter announcing that they live, whom he thinks dead, will confirm the message of joy.

[*Exit* IPHIGENIA.

[1] Others explain "some deep longing for that fate (*i.e.*, voluntary sacrifice in his place) must possess thee."

[2] Reading *ἥνδε* with Bothe and Hermann.

CHO. (*to* ORESTES.) I weep for thee, the victim of her fatal sprinkling.

ORE. Nay, there is nothing here for tears; rather rejoice, ye lady strangers.

CHO. (*to* PYLADES.) I give thee joy, young sir, on thy happy fortune, in that thou wilt tread thy native soil.

PYL. No cause surely to envy a man, when his friends are dying!

CHO. Alas, cruel mission!

Woe is thee! thy doom is sealed. Ah! which of the pair is the more[1] undone? My mind is still distraught with two-fold doubt whether to mourn for thee or thee the more.

ORE. Prithee, Pylades, art thou in like case with myself?

PYL. I know not; thy question finds me with no answer ready.

ORE. Who is this maid? How like a daughter of Hellas she questioned us of the toils at Troy and the Achæans' return, of Calchas the clever augur and famous Achilles! what pity she expressed for Agamemnon's fate, and how she pressed me about his wife and children! This stranger maid is haply an Argive by descent; else would she never have been sending a letter and inquiring so straitly about these matters, as if she shared herself in the welfare of Argos.

PYL. Thou hast forestalled me slightly, but for all that thy conclusions are the same, except on one point; all of course who have ever had dealings with others hear about the misfortunes of kings. But there was quite another theme she discussed.[2]

ORE. What was that? divulge it to me and thou mayest understand it better.

PYL. It is shameful that I should live and thou be slain; as I shared thy voyage, so ought I to share thy death; else

[1] Reading *πότερος ὁ μᾶλλον*, Hermann's emendation for *ὁ μέλλων*.

[2] Reading *διῆλθε*.

shall I get a name for cowardice and knavery through Argos and in all the vales of Phocis; and the mob, being a host of knaves, will think that I betrayed thee and secured[1] a return to my home only for myself, or haply that I murdered thee, while thy house was weak, devising destruction for thee with a view to thy throne, as the husband of thy sister who would succeed. This then is what I fear; of this I am ashamed; and it needs must be my bounden duty to breathe my last with thee, slain by the same knife and burnt on the same pyre, as one who was thy friend and fears reproach.

ORE. Hush! my own sorrows I am bound to bear, and I will not double my burden of grief, when I may carry it single; for that grief and foul reproach of which thou speakest is mine, if I slay thee my fellow-toiler; for me, afflicted as I am by Heaven, 'tis not amiss to leave[2] this life; but thou art prosperous and thy home is pure of taint and sound, while mine is cursed alike by Heaven and destiny. So save thyself and get children of my sister, whom I gave thee to wife; thus will my name live on and my father's house will never be blotted out through having no heir. Go hence and live; make my father's house thy home; but when thou art come to Hellas and to chivalrous Argos, I charge thee by this right hand, heap up my grave and lay thereon memorials of me, and let my sister shed a tear and strew her tresses on my tomb; and tell her how I perished by an Argive maiden's hand, consecrated at the altar by bloodshed. Forsake not my sister when thou seest thy new kin and my father's house forlorn; and fare thee well, my best of friends, for so have I ever found thee, fellow hunter, foster-brother, that oft hast borne the burden of my sorrows! 'Twas Phœbus who deceived us by his prophecies; and so he has devised a trick to drive me as far as might be from Hellas,

[1] Reading σεσῶσθαι σ', a correction of Elmsley's admitted by Kirchhoff.

[2] Reading λείπειν, Monk's correction.

for very shame of his bygone oracles; for, after yielding up my all to him and obeying his word, even to the slaying of my mother, I find myself undone in return.

PYL. A tomb shalt thou have, my luckless friend, nor will I ever prove false to thy sister; for Orestes dead will be e'en dearer to me than Orestes living. [Still the god's oracle hath not destroyed thee yet, albeit thou standest now at the gates of death;][1] nay, but misfortune at her worst sometimes admits a thorough change.

ORE. Cease; the words of Phœbus are no help to me, for yonder comes the maiden from the temple.

IPH. (*to the guard.*) Hence! go help the ministers of death to make their preparations within.

Here is my letter, sirs, with its many folded leaves; but listen to my further wishes. As no man is the same under affliction as when he has suddenly passed from fear to confidence, I am much afraid that when he, who is to carry the letter to Argos, is safely on his way from this land, he will make my message of no account.

ORE. What then wouldst thou? what is troubling thee?

IPH. Let him give me an oath that he will convey this writing to Argos to the friends I wish it to reach.

ORE. Wilt thou give him a similar oath in return?

IPH. What to do? from what refrain? tell me that.

ORE. To let him go forth alive from this savage land.

IPH. Justly urged; for how else could he carry my message?

ORE. But will the king agree to this?

IPH. Yes, I will persuade him, and will myself put thy friend aboard.

ORE. Swear then (*to* PYLADES); and do thou dictate some solemn oath.

[1] Paley thinks this couplet spurious, and suggests that the lines were intended for Orestes, as the best copies give διέφθαρκέν με.

IPH. (*to* PYLADES.) Thou must promise to give this letter to my friends.

PYL. I will give this letter to thy friends.

IPH. And I will send thee safe beyond those sombre rocks.

PYL. By which of the gods dost swear to this?

IPH. By Artemis, in whose temple I hold my honoured office.

PYL. And I by Heaven's king, majestic Zeus.

IPH. Suppose thou fail to keep this oath to my injury?

PYL. May I ne'er return! And thou,—what if thou save me not?

IPH. May I never live to set foot in Argos!

PYL. Pray, hear me on a subject we have overlooked.

IPH. Well, 'tis not too late, provided it be opportune.

PYL. Grant me one exemption; if aught happens to the ship and the letter goes down with the cargo in the waves and I save only myself, let this oath be no longer binding.

IPH. Dost know what I will do? "Much adventure, much achieve."[1] I will tell thee all that is written in the leaves of this letter, so that thou mayst repeat it to my friends; yes, that insures its safety; on the one hand, suppose thou save the writing, the silent lines will of themselves tell its contents; whereas, if what is written here is lost at sea, thy safety will involve the safety of my message.

PYL. A good provision for thy own[2] interests and me; but signify to whom I am to carry this letter to Argos and likewise the message I must repeat from thy lips.

IPH. Go tell Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, "Thy sister Iphigenia, the victim of Aulis, sends thee this message, being still alive, though dead to all in Argos."

[1] The words πολλὰ πολλῶν κυρεῖ seem to be a proverb meaning "one cannot try too many expedients; for where one fails, another may succeed."

[2] Reading τῶν τε σῶν, the emendation of Haupt for τῶν θεῶν.

ORE. Iphigenia still alive! where? is she risen from the dead?

IPH. I, whom thine eyes behold, am she; distract me not by speaking. "Bear me to Argos, brother, ere I die, remove me from this savage land and from the goddess's sacrifices at which I am appointed to slay strangers.

ORE. Pylades, what am I to say? where can we be?

IPH. "Else will I become a curse to thy house, Orestes;" (*stopping to address* PYLADES) thou hast heard the name twice to impress it on thee.

ORE. Ye gods!

IPH. Why invoke the gods in matters which only concern me?

ORE. 'Tis nothing; read on; my thoughts had strayed elsewhere. [Perhaps if I question thee, I shall arrive at the truth.[1]]

IPH. Tell him, the goddess Artemis saved my life by substituting a hind in my stead, which my father sacrificed, when he thought he plunged the sharp knife in me; and she put me to dwell in this land.

There is my message, and that is what is written in the letter.

PYL. How easy for me to observe the oath by which thou hast bound me! how fair thine own! I will make no long delay, but ratify what I have sworn.

There! Orestes, I bring this letter and deliver it to thee from this lady, thy sister.

ORE. I accept it, but letting its folded pages wait awhile I will first indulge my joy, not in mere words. (*Approaching to embrace* IPHIGENIA.) My own dear sister!

[1] This line seems out of place as it stands, and is regarded by Monk and Dindorf as spurious. Hartung's correction εἰς τὰ πίστ' for εἰς ἄπιστ' is here followed, but there is still a want of coherence with what precedes or follows.

struck with wonder though I am, I yet will fold thee to my doubting heart and rejoice in my wondrous news.

CHO. Thou hast no right, sir stranger, to pollute the handmaid of our goddess by throwing thy arms about her holy robes.

ORE. Oh! turn not from me, sister mine, sprung from Agamemnon like myself, now that thou hast found thy brother beyond all expectation.

IPH. Found my brother in thee! A truce to this idle talk! Why, Argos and Nauplia are filled with his presence now.

ORE. That is not where he dwells, poor maid.

IPH. Can[1] thy mother have been a daughter of Spartan Tyndareus?

ORE. Yes, and my father a grandson of Pelops.

IPH. What dost thou say? hast any proof to give me of this?

ORE. I have; ask me something about our father's home.

IPH. Nay, 'tis surely for thee to speak, for me to answer.

ORE. Well, I will tell thee first a story I heard Electra tell; knowest thou ought of a quarrel 'twixt Atreus and Thyestes?

IPH. I have heard that[2] they fell out about a golden lamb.

ORE. Canst thou remember broidering this on the fine texture of thy web?

IPH. Dearest brother! thou comest very near my heart.

ORE. Hast thou forgotten the picture on thy loom, the changing of the sun-god's course?

IPH. That was the very pattern I embroidered with fine-woven thread!

ORE. Next, didst thou receive the bridal bath sent by thy mother to Aulis?

[1] Reading ἀλλ' ἦ with Monk.
[2] Reading οὕνεκ' with Barnes.

IPH. I have not forgotten; that marriage was not so happy as to take away the memory of it.[1]

ORE. Once more, dost remember giving a lock of hair to be carried to thy mother?

IPH. Aye, as a memorial of myself for my tomb in place of my body.

ORE. Next will I name as proofs what I have seen myself; the ancient spear of Pelops in our father's house, hidden away in thy maiden-bower, that spear he brandished in his hand to slay Œnomaus and win Hippodamia, Pisa's prize.

IPH. Orestes, O my brother dear, dearer than aught else to me, I hold thee in my arms, my best-beloved, far from Argos, the home of our fathers.

ORE. And I hold thee, whom all thought dead; while tears, that are not tears of sorrow,[2] with grief and joy commingling, bedew alike thy eyes and mine.

IPH. I left thee [3] in our halls a new-born babe, still in thy nurse's arms, that fatal day. O blest in fortune [4] past all words to tell! What can I say? These things have come upon us transcending wonder or description.

ORE. May we be happy together for the future!

IPH. Good friends, I feel a strange unwonted joy; my only fear is that he will fly from my arms and soar away into the air.

All hail, Cyclopean hearths and homes! my country, dear Mycenæ, hail! I thank thee, yea, I thank thee both for

[1] In this very obscure passage Monk's explanation is followed. Paley regarding the remark as ironical (which is also Badham's view), translates "the marriage was too good a one to deprive me of *that*," *i.e.*, the λουτρὰ. If, as is probable, there is some corruption, Köchly's εἶτ' ἄρ' for οὐ γὰρ would give good sense. Nauck suggests as a possible emendation ὁ χρόνος μακρὸς ὤν.

[2] Reading δάκρυ' ἀδάκρυα with Musgrave.

[3] Hermann added τότε σε at the beginning of l. 834 to complete the metre.

[4] Reading εὐτυχῶν τύχαν with Hermann, and omitting λιμοῦ.

life and bringing up, for that thou hast reared my brother from his youth to be a light unto our house.

ORE. Lucky in our birth, sister, were we, but our life has not proved so lucky in its haps.

IPH. Ah me! how well I recollect the day when my wretched father held the sword-blade at my throat!

ORE. Horrible! I seem to see thee there, though I was not present.

IPH. I remember, brother, being taken away by trickery, as if to wed Achilles; no marriage-hymn was sung; but instead were tears and wailing at the altar. Woe for the water sprinkled on me there!

ORE. And I repeat, woe for our father's reckless deed!

IPH. 'Twas no true father meted out that fate to me, and now one trouble is following on another—

ORE. Yes, if thou hadst slain thy brother, hapless maid.

IPH. By some god's intervention. Oh! that I should have dared so dire a crime! Alas! brother, I ventured on a fearful deed; thou didst but just escape an unholy doom, death at my hands. How will the matter end? what will be my fate? what means can I discover to convey thee hence from this murderous land to thy home in Argos, before the sword requires thy blood? Ah, suffering soul! 'tis thy business to devise a means for this. Wilt thou fly by land, not on shipboard, relying on thy speed of foot?[1] Why, then thou wilt have death ever at thy elbow, as thou farest through savage tribes and over pathless ways; it must be the narrow passage 'twixt "the misty rocks" after all, a tedious course for ships to run.

Ah me! a hapless lot is mine. What god or man or unforeseen event could bring about [1] a happy release, a deliverance from trouble for the two survivors of the house of Atreus?

CHO. This that I have seen with mine eyes, not merely

[1] Reading ἐξανύσαι and omitting φανεῖ after Ἀργείδαιν as a gloss with Kirchhoff.

heard men tell [1] may rank with miracles; 'tis stranger than fiction.

PYL. Orestes, it is natural for friends to embrace each other when they meet, but thou must leave lamenting and face that other question as well, how we are to escape from this savage land, with our safety honourably secured. For the wise man's way, when once he gets a chance, is not to indulge in pleasures foreign to it, abandoning his fortune.

ORE. Thou art right; and fortune, I feel sure, is bent on helping our efforts here; for if a man exerts himself, the gods naturally have greater power.

IPH. (*to* PYLADES.) Thou shalt not stop me or prevent me from first inquiring how Electra fares; for any news of her will be [2] welcome to me.

ORE. Here is her husband (*pointing to* PYLADES), with whom she leads a happy life.

IPH. What is his country? who his sire?

ORE. His father's name is Strophius, a Phocian.

IPH. Why then, he is the son of Atreus' daughter [3] and my kinsman?

ORE. Thy cousin, yes; my one loyal friend.

IPH. He was not born, when my father sought my life.

ORE. No, for Strophius had no son for some time.

IPH. My sister's husband, hail!

ORE. My saviour too and no mere kinsman.

IPH. How didst thou bring thyself to that awful deed regarding our mother?

ORE. Let us say nothing of the deed; 'twas my vengeance for my sire.

IPH. What was her reason for slaying her husband?

[1] Reading *κοὐ κλύουσ' ἀπ' ἀγγέλων*, the joint correction of Dindorf and Hermann.

[2] Paley retains the common reading *φίλα γὰρ ἔσται πάντ' ἐμοί*, but mentions Schöne's conjecture *φίλα γάρ ἐστι τἄμ' ἐμοί* with approval.

[3] Anaxibia, sister of Agamemnon.

ORE. Forego our mother's story; 'tis no tale for thy ears.

IPH. I say no more: but does Argos now look up to thee?

ORE. Menelaus is king, and I an exile from my country.

IPH. Surely our uncle never so insulted our afflicted house?

ORE. No, but the fear of the avenging fiends drives me from the land.

IPH. Then that explains the story of thy madness even here upon the beach.

ORE. This is not the first time I have been seen in my misery.

IPH. I understand: the goddesses were chasing thee on account of thy mother's murder.

ORE. To put a bloody bridle in my mouth.

IPH. But why was it to this land thou didst guide thy steps?

ORE. I came obedient to an oracle of Phœbus.

IPH. With what intent? Is it a secret or may it be told?

ORE. I will tell thee. All my sorrows date from this; after my mother's punishment.—of which I say nothing,—had devolved on me, I was chased into exile by vengeful fiends in hot pursuit, till[1] Loxias at last guided my footsteps to Athens to make atonement to the unnamed goddesses; for there is there a holy tribunal, which Zeus set up one day to try Ares for some pollution, it is said. Now, on my arrival at Athens, not one of my friends was ready to receive me at first, as a man abhorred by Heaven; afterwards they, who had pity on me, supplied me with stranger's cheer at a table apart, being in the same room with me, but by their silence they contrived to exclude me from conversation, that I might keep aloof from their eating and drinking;

[1] For the admitted corruption of the MSS. ἔνθεν μοι πόδα I have followed Nauck and Wecklein in reading ἔστ' ἐμὸν πόδα, with Elmsley's correction ὁπῃ 'ξέπεμψε in the following line.

and, filling each man's cup with the same measure of wine for all, they were enjoying themselves. I meantime did not presume to question my hosts, but was sorrowing in silence and pretending not to notice it, though grieving bitterly that I was my mother's murderer. Moreover, I hear that amongst the Athenians my misfortunes have become the occasion for a festival, and the custom yet survives of the people of Pallas honouring the pitcher.[1] But when I came to Ares' hill and[2] stood my trial, I on one platform, the eldest of the vengeful fiends upon the other, Phœbus, having made his speech and heard the evidence about my mother's murder, saved me by his testimony, and Pallas, counting out the votes in her hand, made them equal for me; so I came off triumphant in the murder-trial. Thereon as many of the avenging fiends as agreed with the verdict and were for settling there, resolved to have a temple close to the tribunal; but such of them as concurred not with the precedent, continued to persecute me in restless pursuit, till once again I sought the hallowed soil of Phœbus, and stretching myself starving before his shrine, I swore to end my life then and there, unless he who had ruined me would find me salvation; whereupon the voice of Phœbus pealed from his golden tripod, and he sent me hither to fetch the image, which fell from heaven, and set it up in Attica. Help me then to compass the means of safety he has appointed me; for if I can secure the image of the goddess, I shall not only cease from my mad fits, but setting out on well-rowed ship restore thee to Mycenæ once again. Ah! my sister, well-beloved! preserve thy father's house and send me hence in safety; for I and the fortunes of Pelops' race are utterly

[1] On the second day of the Athenian festival, the Anthesteria, οἱ Χόες "the pitcher-feast" was observed with prizes for drinking-bouts.

[2] Paley edits ἐς δίκην τ' ἔστην; but Kirchhoff and Nauck after Elmsley, to avoid this rare elision at the end of a line, omit τ', making ἔστην the apodosis and adding δ' after εἰπὼν.

undone, unless we secure the image of the goddess, that fell from heaven.

CHO. Some god's dire anger once burst forth against the seed of Tantalus, and it is leading them through trouble.

IPH. It was long my eager wish, brother, even before thy coming, to be at Argos and see thee face to face; and my desire is thine, to set thee free from suffering and restore my father's stricken house, harbouring no angry thoughts towards him who would have slain me; for so should I be spared thy blood and save my house; but how am I to elude the goddess, and the king, when he finds the stone pedestal robbed of its image? That is my fear. How shall I escape death? what account can I give? If thou canst combine the acts of carrying off the image and placing me upon thy gallant ship, the risk becomes worth running; but, once I am separated from it, I am lost, although thou mayest succeed in thy enterprise and find a safe return; not that I shrink from death,—if die I must,—when I have saved thee; no, indeed! for a man's loss from his family is felt, while a woman's is of little moment.

ORE. I will never be thy murderer as well as my mother's; enough that I have shed her blood! With thee I fain would live one life or dying share the self-same fate. [For if I fall not here myself, I will take[1] thee home, or else remain and die with thee.] Hear my reasoning; were this opposed to the will of Artemis, how could Loxias have bidden me carry the image of the goddess to the citadel of Pallas? . . .[2] and see thy face; wherefore, putting all these facts together, I am hopeful of securing our return.

[1] Reading ἄξω δέ σ', ἤνπερ μὴ αὐτὸς with Canter and Markland, but there is much in these two lines, 1010-11, to support Dindorf's view that they are spurious.

[2] After line 1014 Kirchhoff, following Markland, places a lacuna, in which, perhaps, Orestes was made to say, "I believe the gods are on our side, since they have permitted me to reach this land and . . ." (Jerram.)

IPH. How can we possibly escape death and likewise achieve our object? That is the weak[1] point [in our homeward route; that is what we must devise.[2]]

ORE. Could we contrive to kill the king?

IPH. That is a fearful risk, for new-comers to slay their hosts.

ORE. But we must run the risk, if it will save us.

IPH. I commend your zeal, but you could not succeed.[3]

ORE. Well, suppose thou wert to hide me stealthily in yonder fane?

[IPH. That we might avail ourselves of the darkness, I suppose, and escape?

ORE. Yes, for darkness is the robber's day; the light was made for truth.[4]]

IPH. There are guards inside the temple, whom we cannot elude.

ORE. Alas! we are utterly undone; how are we to escape?

IPH. I have hit upon a novel scheme, methinks.

ORE. Of what kind? Impart thy thoughts to me, that I may know it too.

IPH. I will make a cunning use of thy troubles.

ORE. No doubt thou wilt; women are clever at inventing tricks.

IPH. I shall say thou art a matricide fresh from Argos.

ORE. Make use of my misfortunes, if it will serve thy turn.

[1] Reading *νοσεῖ*, Markland's emendation.

[2] Line 1019 is rejected by Paley as spurious, and it certainly is tame and unnecessary to the sense. Markland's emendation *ἡδὲ βούλευσις* is scarcely preferable to the MSS. reading *ἡ δὲ βούλησις*, and neither is satisfactory.

[3] Paley admits Elmsley's correction *δυναίσθην* for *δυναίμην*.

[4] Lines 1024-5 are marked spurious by most editors. In line 1024 *κσωθεῖμεν* the correction of Brodaeus for *ἔξω θεῖμεν* is here followed.

IPH. And I shall tell them thou art no proper sacrifice for the goddess—

ORE. What reason canst thou give? I half suspect.

IPH. Because thou art unclean; whereas I must have what is pure to offer.

ORE. And how does this bring the goddess's image any nearer capture.

IPH. It will be my wish to purify thee in fresh sea-water.

ORE. Still is the image left in the temple, and that was our object in sailing hither.

IPH. I will say I must wash it also, as if thou hadst touched it.

ORE. But where? Is it a sea-filled creek thou meanest?

IPH. There where thy ship is riding at anchor, moored with ropes.

ORE. Will the image be in thy hands or some other's?

IPH. In mine, for I alone may touch it.

ORE. What part will Pylades have assigned him in the murder?[1]

IPH. He will be described as having the same stain on his hands as thou hast.

ORE. Wilt thou do this unknown to the king or with his knowledge?

IPH. After persuading him, for I could never elude his vigilance.

ORE. Well, at any rate the ship is there with its oars ready to smite the waves. Thy business must it be to see that all else is well arranged. One thing alone is wanting, these ladies' secrecy; implore them and find persuasive arguments; woman is gifted with a power of moving sympathy; and for the rest, all perhaps may turn out well.

[1] *i.e.*, in the account to be given of it. There seems no reason to doubt the MSS. φόνου, though Brodaeus proposed πόνου, Musgrave δόλου, and Winckelmann χοροῦ.

IPH. Dearest friends, I look to you; on you my fortunes are hanging, whether for weal or woe, and loss of fatherland [and brother and sister dear.] [1]

Be this the text of what I have to say,—our womanhood, with its kindly feeling towards members of our sex, and our intense loyalty in preserving secrets, that affect us all. For my sake hold your peace and help us might and main to escape; an honour to its owner is a trusty tongue. Now ye see how a single chance is left these three fast friends, either to return to their fatherland or die here. If once my safety is secured, I will bring thee safe to Hellas, that thou mayst also share my fortune. To thee, and thee (*addressing different members of the* CHORUS) I make my prayer by thy right hand; to thee by thy dear cheek, thy knees, and all thou prizest most at home, by father, mother, aye, and babes, if there be any mothers here.[2] What say ye? which of you assents to this and which refuses? Speak; for if ye agree not to my proposal, both I and my luckless brother are lost.

CHO. Take heart, dear lady mine; only save thyself; for thou shalt find me dumb, wherever thou enjoinest silence; so help me mighty Zeus!

IPH. A blessing on you for those words! may happiness be yours! 'Tis now thy part and thine (*to* ORESTES *and* PYLADES) to enter the temple, for our monarch will soon be here, inquiring if the sacrifice of the strangers is over.

Dread queen! that once didst save my life from my father's hand and murder dire, save me now again, and these as well; else will the words of Loxias cease to be believed

[1] Reading φίλου τ' ἀδελφοῦ φιλτάτης τε συγγόνου with Seidler, but Paley is probably right in rejecting this very weak line; the same editor remarks that the next verse is open to suspicion, though not so clearly an interpolation.

[2] Dindorf and Kirchhoff reject line 1071. Monk reads εἴ τῳ for ὅτῳ; but the verse is a needless addition and probably spurious.

by men because of thee. Oh! be gracious and quit this savage shore for glorious Athens; for 'tis not right that thou shouldst live on here, when a city so blest may be thine.

Exeunt IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, *and* PYLADES.

CHO. O bird by ocean's rocky reefs! thou halcyon, that singest thy hard fate in doleful song,[1] whose note the well-trained ear can catch, and know that thou art ever moaning for thy mate; with thee I match my tearful plaint, an unwinged songstress, longing for the gatherings of Hellas, for Artemis our help in childbirth,[2] whose home is by the Cynthian hill with its luxuriant palm and sprouting bay and sacred shoots of olive pale, welcome to Latona in her travail,[3] beside the rounded eddying mere, where tuneful swans do service to the Muse. Woe! for the streams of tears that coursed adown my cheeks, what time our turrets fell, and I, the prey of oar and spear, was set aboard a foeman's ship; then, purchased at a costly price, was carried to this foreign port, where I minister to the daughter of Agamemnon, priestess of the huntress queen, serving at altars on which sheep are never sacrificed,[4] and envying her[5] that hath been always unhappy: for if a man is born and bred in hardships, he fainteth not under them; but happiness is subject to change,[6] and to be afflicted after prosperous days is a grievous lot for mortals.

Home the Argive ship will bear thee, lady, and piercing

[1] οἶτον. Barnes' correction οἴκτρὸν, though adopted by several editors, is not very probable, as Paley points out; for why should transcribers have changed an obvious epithet to a difficult noun?

[2] λοχίαν. Nauck reads ὀλβίαν.

[3] Reading ὠδῖνι φίλας with Portus and Markland.

[4] Reading οἰ μηλοθύτας with Musgrave. Köchly's Ἑλληνοθύτας is plausible.

[5] Reading ζηλοῦσα τὰν with Bothe and Monk.

[6] Paley admits Lenting's correction μεταβάλλει δ' εὐδαιμονία. Badham suggests τᾷ πάλαι, retaining the MSS. δυσδαιμονίᾳ, with no stop at ὧν.

notes from mountain Pan's wax-fastened reed,[1] will cheer the rowers to their task, and prophetic Phœbus will bring his deep-toned lyre with seven strings and escort thee with singing to fair bright Attica. Thee will dashing oar-blades speed away, leaving me still here; and over the bows of thy speeding bark the sheets will make her canvas swell against the forestays in the breeze.[2]

Oh! to tread yon dazzling track where the fiery sun goes gladly forth, and, when above my chamber-roof, to rest the rapid pinions on my back! Oh! to take my station in the dance, where once at noble marriages[3] I circled round in friendly strife of charms[4] with my compeers, and roused them to vie with the rich splendour of my dress, as I drew my broidered veil about me and shaded my cheek with clustering curls.

THO. Where is the warder of these temple-gates, the maid of Hellas? Has she yet begun the rites on the strangers? are their bodies ablaze in the holy shrine?

CHO. Here she is, O king, to explain everything to thee.

[1] *i.e.*, the note of the τριηραύλης, "flute-player," who gave the time to the rowers.

[2] Reading—

ἀέρι δ' ἱστί' ἐπὶ προτόνοις κατὰ
πρῷραν ὑπὲρ στόλον ἐκπετάσουσι πόδες
ναὸς ὠκυπόμπου,

(Paley's later reading; the translation also follows the explanation given in his note *ad loc.*).

[3] Reading—χοροῖς δὲ σταίην ὅθι καὶ πάρεδρος—(Badham), or possibly πάρος ἐν εὐδοκίμοις γάμοις (Paley's suggestion).

[4] Reading—

πέρι πώδ' εἰλίσσουσα φίλας
πρὸς ἡλίκων θιάσους
ἐς ἀμίλλας χαρίτων,
τᾶς θ' ἁβροπλούτοιο χλιδᾶς
εἰς ἔριν ὀρνυμένα.

In this way a hopelessly corrupt text has been patched up by Hermann, Markland, and others; but it still remains anything but satisfactory.

THO. Ha! daughter of Agamemnon, why art thou bearing yon image of the goddess in thine arms from the sacred pedestal?

IPH. Stay there, O king, at the entrance.

THO. What news now in the temple, Iphigenia?

IPH. Avaunt! I say; (*turning to* THOAS *to explain*) 'tis in purity's cause I utter this word.

THO. What is thy news, requiring such a preface? Explain.

IPH. The victims, sire, which ye had captured for me are unclean.

THO. What proof of this hast thou? or is it mere conjecture?

IPH. The statue of the goddess turned away from its position.

THO. Of its own accord, or did an earthquake turn it?

IPH. Of its own accord, and it closed its eyes.

THO. What is the cause? the strangers' pollution?

IPH. Yes, that and nothing else; they have committed a crime.

THO. Can they have slain one of my subjects on the beach?

IPH. They brought the guilt of murder with them,—the guilt of kindred slain.

THO. Who was their victim? I am desirous of learning.

IPH. 'Twas a mother's blood they spilt, having conspired to stab her.

THO. O Apollo! even amongst barbarians none would have had the heart to do it.

IPH. They were hunted from every corner of Hellas.

THO. Is this the reason thou art carrying the image from the shrine?

IPH. Yes, to remove it from the taint of bloodshed by placing it beneath the holy firmament.

THO. In what way didst thou discover the impurity of these strangers?

IPH. When the image of the goddess turned away, I questioned them.

THO. Thou art a shrewd daughter of Hellas to have guessed this so cleverly.

IPH. Yea, and only now they dangled before me a tempting bait to catch my fancy.

THO. By bringing news of those in Argos to lure thee?

IPH. Good news of Orestes, my only brother.

THO. No doubt to induce thee to spare them for their glad tidings.

IPH. They said too that my father was alive and well.

THO. Naturally thy escape was a reference to the claims of the goddess.

IPH. Yes, for I hate all Hellas, that betrayed me.

THO. What, pray, are we to do with the strangers?

IPH. We must piously observe the established custom.

THO. Is not the lustral water ready, and thy knife?

IPH. My purpose is to cleanse them first by purification.

THO. In fresh spring water or salt sea-spray?

IPH. The sea washes away from man all that is ill.

THO. True, they would then be holier victims for the goddess.

IPH. Yes, and this would suit my own views better.

THO. Well, do not the waves dash full upon the temple-walls?

IPH. Solitude is necessary; for we have other duties to perform.

THO. Take them where thou wilt; I have no wish to witness what may not be told.

IPH. I must also purify the image of the goddess.

THO. Yes, if any taint has come upon it from the matricides.

IPH. Had there been none, I should never have removed it from its pedestal.

THO. Thy piety and forethought are right.

IPH. Let me have the things thou knowest I require.

THO. 'Tis for thee to name those wants.

IPH. Load the strangers with fetters.

THO. Whither could they escape from thee?

IPH. Good faith is quite unknown among Hellenes.

THO. (*to his servants.*) Away, and bind them, sirrahs!

IPH. Next let them bring the strangers forth.

THO. It shall be done.

IPH. After drawing a veil over their heads—

THO. In presence of the radiant sun.[1]

IPH. Send some of thy attendants with me.

THO. Here are those who will form thy escort.

IPH. Also dispatch a messenger to warn the citizens.

THO. What will happen?

IPH. To remain indoors, all of them.

THO. Lest they meet[2] with murderers?

IPH. Aye, for such things bring pollution.

THO. (*to a servant.*) Hence and proclaim this!

IPH.[3] Above all must my friends—

THO. Thou meanest me.

IPH. Keep wholly out of sight.

THO. Thou takest good heed for the city's weal.

IPH. No wonder.

THO. No wonder the whole city looks up to thee.[4]

[1] *i.e.*, to avoid polluting the sun by exposing a murderer to its rays.

[2] Reading *συναντῶσιν* with Elmsley.

[3] The reading and arrangement of lines 1210-14 follows that of Jerram, based upon conjectures and alterations by Elmsley and Hermann, *e.g.*, *γε δεῖ* is read for *οἰ δεῖς* in l. 1212, and *εἰκότως* is inserted in l. 1214; also lines 1212-13 are transposed. These changes, though somewhat sweeping, are less so than most which have been attempted.

[4] Dindorf rejects l. 1214 as an interpolation, *εἰκότως* was assigned to *Iphigenia* by Hermann to complete the metre; Schöne admits it.

IPH. Do thou stay here before the shrine to help the goddess.[1]

THO. With what object?

IPH. Purify the building with torches.

THO. That thou mayst find it pure on thy return?

IPH. As soon as the strangers pass out—

THO. What must I do?

IPH. Hold thy robe before thine eyes.

THO. To avoid the murderer's taint?

IPH. But if I appear to be tarrying over long—

THO. Is there to be any limit to my waiting?

IPH. Feel no surprise.

THO. Take thine own time and serve the goddess well.

IPH. Oh may this purification have the end I wish!

THO. I add my prayers to that. [*Exit* THOAS.

IPH. Behold, I see the strangers just leaving the temple with ornaments for the goddess and young lambs for me to purge the taint of blood by shedding more; with blazing torches too, and all else that I myself prescribed for the cleansing of the strangers and the goddess.

Away from this pollution, citizens! each warden of the temple-gates keeping pure his hands in Heaven's service; whoso is eager to marry a wife; all women labouring with child; hence! hence! away! that this pollution cross not your path.

(*Aside.*) Virgin Queen, daughter of Zeus and Latona! if I wash the murderers of their guilt and sacrifice where 'tis right I should, thy temple will be pure for thy habitation, and we shall be blest; more I say not, but still my meaning is plain to thee, goddess, and to those like thee who know the rest.

[*Exit* IPHIGENIA.

CHO. Fair was the child Latona bore one day in the

[1] Paley's suggested restoration of this passage is extremely plausible; Ιφ. *σὲ δὲ μένοντ' αὐτοῦ πρὸ ναῶν τῆς θεᾶς.* Θ. *τί χρῆμα δρῶ;* Ιφ. *ἁγνίσαι χρὴ σὸν μίλαθρον.*

fruitful vales of Delos, a babe with golden hair,[1] well skilled in harping and [2] his darling archery, and, leaving the scene of her glorious travail, she brought him from that sea-beat ridge to the peak of Parnassus, parent [3] of gushing streams, where Dionysus holds his revels. There 'neath the shade of leafy bays a speckled snake with blood-red eyes, armoured in gleaming scales,[4] an earth-born monster, huge, terrific, kept guard o'er the oracle beneath the ground; but thou, whilst yet a babe still struggling in thy mother's arms, didst slay him, Phœbus, and enter on most holy prophecy, and thou sittest on the golden tripod, thy throne of truth, dispensing Heaven's oracles to men from beneath the sanctuary, in thy home at earth's centre, hard by the founts of Castaly.

But when Apollo's [5] coming had dispossessed Earth's daughter, Themis, of the holy oracles, her mother raised a brood of nightly phantoms seen in dreams, telling to many a mortal wight, as he lay asleep [6] in the darkness, what has been and yet shall be; and Earth, jealous for her daughter's sake, robbed Phœbus of the honour of his oracles; but he, the prince, went hurrying off to Olympus and twined his childish arms round [7] Zeus's throne, beseeeching him to take

[1] Omitting φοῖβον as a gloss with Musgrave. Kirchhoff thinks a finite verb is wanting before χρυσοκόμαν, such as ἔτικτε; and he would read φέρε δ' Ἰνιν in l. 1239, but it is possible to understand the passage without these alterations.

[2] Reading ᾧ Weil's excellent correction of ἅ, which latter would introduce a most awkward allusion to Artemis.

[3] Reading ματέρ' εἰς Seidler's correction of μάτηρ.

[4] For κατάχαλκος, which most editors regard as spurious, Badham's σκιερὸν κάτεχ' ἄλσος εὐφύλλου δάφνας is the most happy of a host of emendations.

[5] Reading ἀπενάσσατ' Ἀπόλλωνι with Seidler instead of ἀπὸ.

[6] For [γᾶς] εὐνὰς Linder conjectured χαμεύνας, γᾶς being almost certainly an interpolation.

[7] ἕλιξεν ἐκ Διὸς θρόνων, so the MSS., but Badham's ὄρεξεν εἰς Δῖον θρόνον is worth consideration.

from his Pythian home the visions nightly sent by angry Earth; and Zeus smiled to see his son come straight to him, because he would keep his worship, rich in precious gifts; and he nodded his locks, promising to stop the voices heard at night, and took from mortals the divination[1] of darkness, restoring his honours to Loxias, and to mortals their confidence in the oracles he chanted on his throne amid the throng of pilgrims.

MES. Guardians of the temple and ministers of the altar, where is Thoas the king of this land? throw wide those bolted doors and call the monarch outside the building.

CHO. What is wrong? if I may speak unbidden.

MES. The pair of youths have disappeared, seeking to fly the land, by the tricks of Agamemnon's child, and they have taken the sacred statue in the hold of their ship.

CHO. Incredible! But the king of the land, whom thou wishest to see, has already left the shrine in hot haste.

MES. Whither away? for he must be told what is happening.

CHO. We know not; but set off in pursuit, and, when thou hast found him, tell thy news.

MES. See how treacherous women are! *Ye*[2] have had some share in these doings.

CHO. Art mad? What have we to do with the strangers' escape? Away and lose no time in reaching thy master's gates!

MES. Not until some one makes this point quite clear, whether the ruler of the land is in the shrine or not.

What ho! unbar the doors! to those inside I call; tell my master I am here at the gate with heavy news for him.

THO. (*appearing at the temple door.*) Who is raising this uproar at the temple, battering the doors and spreading panic within?

[1] Reading *μαντοσύναν* with Markland for *λαθοσύναν* of MSS.

[2] Paley reads *μέτεστι γ'* for *μέτεστί θ'*.

MES. These women tried to get me away, asserting falsely[1] that thou wert gone forth, though in the temple all the time.

THO. What did they expect to gain? What was their object?

MES. I will tell thee about them later; listen now to the matter in hand. The maid Iphigenia, who used to be the priestess here, has fled the land with the strangers, taking the goddess's holy image with her; that cleansing was all a sham.

THO. How now? what evil influence possessed her?[2]

MES. In her efforts to save Orestes. Yes, that will astonish thee.

THO. Which Orestes? him whom the daughter of Tyndareus bare?

MES. Him whom our goddess consecrated to herself at her altar.

THO. Miraculous event! How can I find too strong a name for thee?

MES. Turn not thy attention thither, but listen to me; and, when thou hast heard all and weighed the matter, devise a means of pursuit to hunt the strangers down.

THO. Say on, for thy words are good; 'tis no short voyage they have before them, that so they can escape my ships.

MES. As soon as we reached the beach where the ship of Orestes was moored in hiding, the daughter of Agamemnon signed to us, whom thou sentest with her to carry fetters for the strangers, to stand aloof, as if she were about to light the mystic flame and offer the cleansing rites, which she had come to perform. Holding in her hands the cord that bound the strangers, she went on behind them. This seemed suspicious, sire, but thy attendants were satisfied. After

[1] Reading, as Paley does with Pierson, *ψευδῶς λέγουσαί μ' αἳδ' ἀπήλαυνον δόμων.*

[2] Regarded from Iphigenia's point of view, this may also mean "what *favouring* circumstance obtaining?"

a while, to make us think she was really doing something unusual, she lifted up her voice and began chanting magic spells in a strange tongue, as if forsooth she were cleansing them of their blood-guiltiness. Now after we had continued sitting a long time, it occurred to us that the strangers might have broken loose and slain her and taken to flight; still as we were afraid of witnessing what we ought not to have seen, we remained seated in silence, until at last the same proposal was made by all of us, to go to them, although no leave was given. And there we see the hull of a vessel of Hellas with winged broadside of oar-blades fitted to it, and fifty sailors, oar in hand, at the tholes, and the youths, now free, standing astern the ship; while some were steadying the prow with poles, others hanging the anchor to the cat-heads, and the rest hauling in cables,[1] getting ladders ready the while and letting them down into the sea for the strangers' use. Now when we saw their crafty tricks, we laid hold of the stranger maid and the hawsers recklessly, trying at the same time to unship the helm from the gallant craft through its rudder-port; and words passed between us: "What pretext have ye for this stealthy raid on images and priestesses from our land? who, and whose son art thou that seekest to smuggle this maiden hence?" And answer came, "I am Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, this maiden's own brother, that thou mayst learn the truth; for she whom I am taking hence with me is the sister I once lost from my home." None the less we held the stranger maid and were for forcing her to follow us to thee, and that was how my cheeks came by these fearful blows; for they had no weapons in their hands, nor yet had we; but there was sturdy buffeting of fists, and likewise feet were aimed at side and heart by both those youths, [so

[1] Line 1352 has been suspected by some editors; if it be omitted and Kirchhoff's δίζοντες read for δὲ ζόντες, all difficulty is removed. Paley supposes some confusion to have arisen from the combination of two readings.

we closed with them and were at once exhausted [1]]. Then we fled to the cliff, most terribly marked, covered with bloody weals, some on their heads and others on their eyes; but once stationed on the rocks, we fought more cautiously and began by pelting them with stones; but archers, posted on the stern, kept us off with arrows, compelling us to retire to a distance. Meantime a monster wave had driven the vessel shoreward, and as the maiden [2] feared to wet her feet, Orestes took his sister on his left shoulder, and, stepping into the sea, he leapt upon the ladder and set her down inside the gallant ship, with the image of the daughter of Zeus, which fell from heaven. Anon a voice was heard speaking from the vessel's midst, "Ye mariners of Hellas! grip your oars and dash the billows into foam, for now the prize is ours, which we sailed to the Euxine Sea to win, through the jaws of the clashing rocks."

With deep-drawn sighs of joy they smote the brine, and the ship made way, so long as she was inside the haven, but, meeting a furious surge, as she was crossing the harbour-bar, she began to labour; for on a sudden a tempestuous wind arose and forced her [3] shoreward stern foremost; [4] and the rowers tugged and strained to fight the wave, but still its backward wash would drive their ship to land again. Then Agamemnon's daughter rose and prayed, "O daughter of Latona, save me, bring thy priestess unto Hellas out of this savage land, and pardon my theft. As thou, O goddess, lovest thy brother, so believe that I too love my kith and

[1] This verse is corrupt, or more probably spurious, as Paley holds; of the numerous emendations proposed not one can be called in the slightest degree probable. Hermann suggests ὡς τῷ ξυνάπτειν.

[2] Reading παρθένῳ with Badham, who thus supplied the MSS. lacuna.

[3] Reading σκάφος with Wecklein for the corrupt νεὼς of the MSS.

[4] Reading παλιμπρυμνηδόν, Hermann's restoration from Hesychius.

kin." Therewith the sailors sung their pæan to second the maiden's prayer, and, baring their arms from the shoulder down, gripped their oars tightly at the boatswain's cry. But ever nearer to the rocks the ship drew on, and some sprang into the sea, others began fastening twisted nooses to the shore; while I was straightway sent hither to thee, my liege, to announce what had befallen there. So haste thee hence, with gyves and cords; for, unless the waves grow calm, those strangers have no hope of safety.

It is Poseidon, majestic ruler of the main, who is regarding Ilium with favour but frowning on the race of Pelops; and now, it seems, he will deliver up into thy hands and the hands of thy subjects the son of Agamemnon with his sister, for she stands convicted of faithlessness to the goddess in forgetting the sacrifice at Aulis.[1] [*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHO. Alas for thee, Iphigenia! once more within the tyrant's clutch thou wilt be slain with thy brother.

THO. Ho! every dweller in this foreign land, up and bridle your steeds and gallop to the beach! there await the stranding of the Hellenes' ship, and then hunt the godless wretches eagerly with the help of the goddess. Go, you others, and launch my swiftest galleys, that we may either overhaul them by sea or ride them down by land and hurl them headlong from a precipice or impale their limbs on stakes.

(*Turning to the Chorus.*) As for you women, their accomplices herein, I will punish you hereafter, when I have leisure, but now with the present business before me, I will not remain idle.

ATH. Whither, King Thoas, whither art thou carrying this pursuit? Hearken to the words of Athena who is here

[1] Editors regard ll. 1418-9 with some suspicion as they stand, and it is difficult to see how the Greek can bear the obvious meaning. Badham's suggestion *ἢ φόνου τοὺν Αὐλίδι ἀμνημόνευτον θεὰν* is intelligible, with Köchly's and Nauck's further emendation *ἀμνημόνευτος*.

Cease pursuing or sending soldiers streaming after them; for Orestes was destined by Apollo's oracle to come hither, first to escape the fury of the avenging fiends, and then to convey his sister home to Argos and the sacred image to my land, [a respite from his present afflictions].[1] This I say to thee; and for Orestes, whom they thinkest to catch at sea and slay, e'en now is Poseidon guiding him hence on his ship for my sake, smoothing the surface of the deep.

Orestes,—thou hearest the voice, for it is a goddess speaking, although thou art not here,—mark well my hests, take the image and thy sister, and go hence; and when thou art come to Athens, that god-built town, thou wilt find a spot upon the utmost bounds of Attica, bordering on Carystus' ridge, a holy place called Halae by my people. There build a temple and set up the image, named after the Taurian land and the labours long endured by thee in ranging Hellas to and fro through the goading of avenging fiends. Henceforth shall mortal men chant her praises as Artemis the Taurian goddess. Ordain this law also; when the people celebrate her festival, the priest, to compensate her for thy sacrifice, must hold his knife to a human throat and blood must flow to satisfy the sacred claims of the goddess, that she may have her honours.

As for thee, Iphigenia, thou must keep her temple-keys at Brauron's hallowed path of steps;[2] there shalt thou die and there shall they bury thee; honouring thee with offerings of robes, e'en all the finely-woven vestments left in their homes by such as die in childbirth. (*To* THOAS.) And I charge thee send these daughters of Hellas on their way hence because of their righteous decision[3] . . . . . I saved thee

[1] Line 1442 is regarded by Kirchhoff and most editors as spurious.

[2] Said to refer to steps cut in the rock leading to the temple of Artemis at Brauron.

[3] Kirchhoff and others after Brodaeus mark a lacuna after l. 1468, though γνώμης δικαίας οὕνεκ' *might* connect with what preceded, signi-

once before, Orestes, when I allotted the votes equally on the hill of Ares; and this shall be an ordinance;[1] whoever secures an equal division of votes wins his case. So bear thy sister from the land, son of Agamemnon, and thou, Thoas, be no longer angry.

THO. Whoso hears the voice of God and disobeys is no sane man, O queen Athena. For my part, I am not wroth with Orestes or his sister, though he *has* taken the image hence; for what credit is there in struggling with the mighty gods? Let them go with the goddess's image to thy land and there erect it to their joy. Moreover I will send these women to Hellas, their happy home, as thou commandest me, and will check my spear which I am lifting against the strangers, and stop the sailing of my ships, since this is thy good pleasure, goddess.

ATH. Well said; for necessity is stronger than thee, aye, and than the gods.

Go, ye breezes, waft the son of Agamemnon on his way to Athens; and I myself will share his voyage, keeping the image of my sister safe.

CHO. Go and luck go with you, happy in your preservation![2]

Hail to thee! Pallas Athena, name revered by deathless gods as well as mortal men! we will perform all thy bidding; for very welcome and unlooked for are the words I have heard.

Most holy Victory! possess my life and never grudge thy crown!

fying the just decision of the Chorus in agreeing to help Iphigenia in saving Orestes and Pylades'; but the words, which follow, show no such connection, the transition to Orestes being too abrupt and inconsequent.

[1] Reading with Markland *καὶ νόμισμ' ἔσται τόδε* (Köchly *νόμιμον*).

[2] Connecting *τῆς σωζομένης* with *μοίρας*, rather than with Artemis or Iphigenia, as Reiske and Paley respectively do; but the phrase *τῆς σωζομένης μοίρας εἶναι*, "to be of the number of the saved," is quoted by Musgrave from Aristides, the orator, and perhaps that is the meaning here.

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AGAMEMNON.
ATTENDANT, AN OLD MAN.
CHORUS OF WOMEN OF CHALCIS.
MENELAUS.
CLYTEMNESTRA.
IPHIGENIA.
ACHILLES.
MESSENGER.

SCENE.—The sea-coast at Aulis.

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS.

AGA. Old man, come hither and stand before my dwelling.

ATT. I come; what new schemes now, king Agamemnon?

AGA. Thou shalt hear.

ATT. I am all eagerness. 'Tis little enough sleep old age allows me and keenly it watches o'er my eyes.

AGA. What can that star be, steering his course yonder?

ATT. Sirius, still shooting o'er the zenith on his way near the Pleiads' sevenfold track.

[AGA.][1] The birds are still at any rate and the sea is calm; [hushed are the winds, and silence broods o'er this narrow firth.

[ATT.] Then why art thou outside thy tent, why so restless, my lord Agamemnon?] All is yet quiet here in Aulis, the watch on the walls is not yet astir. Let us go in.

AGA. I envy thee, old man, aye, and every man who leads a life secure, unknown and unrenowned; but little I envy those in office.

ATT. And yet 'tis there we place the be-all and end-all of existence.[2]

AGA. Aye, but that is where the danger comes; and

[1] The arrangement of the following lines is uncertain. Monk, omitting ll. 10-13, *σιγαὶ δ'—ἄναξ* as interpolated, gives the whole passage down to l. 16, *στείχωμεν ἔσω*, to the aged attendant. Paley considers this the most likely arrangement.

[2] Others join *ἐνταῦθα βίου*, "in this position in life."

ambition,[1] sweet though it seems, brings sorrow with its near approach. At one time the unsatisfied claims of Heaven upset our life, at another the numerous peevish fancies of our subjects shatter it.

ATT. I like not these sentiments in one who is a chief. It was not to enjoy all blessings that Atreus begot thee, O Agamemnon; but thou must needs experience joy and sorrow alike, mortal as thou art. E'en though thou like it not, this is what the gods decree; but thou, after letting thy taper spread its light abroad, writest the letter which is still in thy hands and then erasest the same words again, sealing and re-opening the scroll, then flinging the tablet to the ground with floods of tears and leaving nothing undone in thy aimless behaviour to stamp thee mad. What is it troubles thee? what news is there affecting thee,[2] my liege? Come, share with me thy story; to a loyal and trusty heart wilt thou be telling it; for Tyndareus sent me that day to form part of thy wife's dowry and to wait upon the bride with loyalty.

AGA. Leda, the daughter of Thestius, had three children, maidens, Phœbe, Clytemnestra my wife, and Helen; this last it was who had for wooers the foremost of the favoured sons of Hellas; but terrible threats of spilling his rival's blood were uttered by each of them, should he fail to win the maid. Now the matter filled Tyndareus, her father, with perplexity; at length this thought occurred to him; the suitors should swear unto each other and join right hands thereon and pour libations with burnt-sacrifice, binding themselves by this curse, "Whoever wins the child of Tyndareus for wife, him will we assist, in case a rival takes her from his house and goes his way, robbing her husband of his rights; and we

[1] *τὸ φιλότιμον* of the MSS., but the verse is probably corrupt, being regarded by Hermann and Dindorf as a gloss on *τὸ καλόν*.

[2] *περί σοι*, but Monk's *πάρα σοι*, "what news has reached thee?" is a plausible emendation.

will march against that man in armed array and raze his city to the ground, Hellene no less than barbarian."

Now when they had once pledged their word and old Tyndareus with no small cleverness had beguiled them by his shrewd device, he allowed his daughter to choose from among her suitors the one towards whom[1] the breath of love might fondly waft her. Her choice fell on Menelaus; would she had never taken him! Anon there came to Lacedæmon from Phrygia's folk the man who, legend says, adjudged the goddesses' dispute; in robes of gorgeous hue, ablaze with gold, in true barbaric pomp; and he, finding Menelaus gone from home, carried Helen off with him to his steading on Ida, a willing paramour. Goaded to frenzy Menelaus flew through Hellas, invoking the ancient oath exacted by Tyndareus and declaring the duty of helping the injured husband. Whereat the chivalry of Hellas, brandishing their spears and donning their harness, came hither to the narrow straits of Aulis with armaments of ships and troops, with many a steed and many a car, and they chose me to captain them all[2] for the sake of Menelaus, since I was his brother. Would that some other had gained that distinction instead of me! But after the army was gathered and come together, we still remained at Aulis weather-bound; and Calchas, the seer, bade us in our perplexity sacrifice my own begotten child Iphigenia to Artemis, whose home is in this land, declaring that if we offered her, we should sail and sack the Phrygians' capital, but if we forbore, this was not for us.[3] When I heard this, I commanded Talthybius with loud proclamation to disband the whole host, as I could never bear to slay daughter of mine. Whereupon my

[1] Reading ὅτῳ with Boissonade and Monk. Hermann retaining ὅτου gives the sense as, "whosesoever love, acceptable to her, impelled her to choose him."

[2] Paley reads πᾶσι for MSS. κᾆτα. Others gives κάρτα.

[3] Nauck rejects l. 93.

brother, bringing every argument to bear, persuaded me at last to face the crime; so I wrote in a folded scroll and sent to my wife, bidding her despatch our daughter to me on the pretence of wedding Achilles, at the same time magnifying his exalted rank and saying that he refused to sail with the Achæans, unless a bride of our lineage should go to Phthia. Yes, this was the inducement I offered my wife, inventing, as I did, a sham marriage for the maiden. Of all the Achæans we alone know the real truth, Calchas, Odysseus, Menelaus and myself; but that which I then decided wrongly, I now rightly countermand again in this scroll, which thou, old man, hast found me opening and resealing beneath the shade of night. Up now and away with this missive to Argos, and I will tell thee by word of mouth all that is written herein, the contents of the folded scroll, for thou art loyal to my wife and house.

ATT. Say on and make it plain, that what my tongue utters may accord with what thou hast written.

AGA. "Daughter of Leda, in addition to my first letter, I now send thee word not to despatch thy daughter to Eubœa's embosomed wing, to the waveless bay of Aulis; for after all we will celebrate our child's wedding at another time."

ATT. And how will Achilles, cheated of his bride, curb the fury of his indignation against thee and thy wife?

AGA. Here also is a danger.[1]

ATT. Tell me what thou meanest.

AGA. It is but his name, not himself, that Achilles is lending, knowing nothing of the marriage or of my scheming or my professed readiness to betroth my daughter to him for a husband's embrace.[2]

[1] Paley follows Musgrave in assigning these words to Agamemnon, assuming that the king passes over the servant's last remark and adds a new cause of alarm, viz., the fraud that is being practised on Achilles.

[2] Lines 124-32 are rejected by some editors. Hennig supposes *them to* be the work of the younger Euripides.

ATT. A dreadful venture thine, king Agamemnon! thou that, by promise of thy daughter's hand to the son of the goddess, wert for bringing the maid hither to be sacrificed for the Danai.

AGA. Woe is me! ah woe! I am utterly distraught; bewilderment comes o'er me.

Away! hurry thy steps, yielding nothing to old age.

ATT. In haste I go, my liege.

AGA. Sit not down by woodland founts; scorn the witcheries of sleep.

ATT. Hush![1]

AGA. And when thou passest any place where roads diverge, cast thine eyes all round, taking heed that no mule-wain pass by on rolling wheels, bearing my daughter hither to the ships of the Danai, and thou see it not.

ATT. It shall be so.

AGA. Start then from the bolted gates,[2] and if thou meet the escort, start them back again, and drive at full speed to the abodes of the Cyclopes.

ATT. But tell me, how shall my message find credit with thy wife or child?

AGA. Preserve the seal which thou bearest on this scroll. Away! already the dawn is growing grey, lighting the lamp of day yonder and the fire of the sun's four steeds; help me in my trouble. [*Exit* ATTENDANT.

None of mortals is prosperous or happy to the last, for none was ever born to a painless life. [*Exit* AGAMEMNON.

CHO. To the sandy beach of sea-coast Aulis I came after a voyage through the tides of Euripus, leaving Chalcis on its narrow firth, my city which feedeth the waters of far-

[1] The old man cuts short Agamemnon's warnings, as being an uncalled-for reflection on his own loyalty.

[2] Paley retains the MSS. κλῄθρων ἔ' ἐξόρμα, omitting νιν with Monk in l. 150; Wecklein, reading ἐξορμώσαις to agree with πομπαῖς, retains νιν. Hermann transposes the verse after l. 152, and so Nauck edits.

famed Arethusa near the sea, [that I might behold the army of the Achæans and the ships rowed by those god-like heroes; for our husbands tell us that fair-haired Menelaus and high-born Agamemnon are leading them to Troy on a thousand ships in quest of the lady Helen, whom herdsman Paris carried off from the banks of reedy Eurotas,—his guerdon from Aphrodite, when that queen of Cyprus entered beauty's lists with Hera and Pallas at the gushing fount.[1]]

Through the grove of Artemis, rich with sacrifice, I sped my course, the red blush mantling on my cheeks from maiden modesty, in my eagerness to see the soldiers' camp, the tents of the mail-clad Danai, and their gathered steeds. [[2] Two chieftains there I saw met together in council; one was Aias, son of Oileus; the other Aias, son of Telamon, crown of glory to the men of Salamis; and I saw Protesilaus and Palamedes, sprung from the son of Poseidon, sitting there amusing themselves with intricate figures at draughts; Diomedes too at his favourite sport of hurling quoits; and Meriones, the War-god's son, a marvel to mankind, stood at his side; likewise I beheld the offspring of Laertes, who came from his island hills, and with him Nireus, handsomest of all Achæans; Achilles next, that nimble runner, swift on his feet as the wind, whom Thetis bore and Chiron trained; him I saw upon the beach, racing in full armour along the shingle, and straining every nerve to beat a team of four horses, as he sped round the track on foot; and Eumelus, the grandson of Pheres, their driver, was shouting when I saw him, goading on his goodly steeds, with their bits of chased gold-work; whereof the centre pair, that bore the yoke, had dappled coats picked out with white, while the

[1] Dindorf, with whom Paley agrees, regards ll. 171-84 as the work of a later hand, and gives good reasons for his opinion.

[2] The whole of the following long passage from l. 192-302 is inclosed in brackets by Paley. Dindorf and Hermann condemn the greater part, *retaining* a few lines here and there.

trace-horses, on the outside, facing the turning-post in the course,[1] were bays with spotted fetlocks. Close beside them Peleus' son leapt on his way, in all his harness, keeping abreast the rail by the axle-box.

Next I sought the countless fleet, a wonder to behold, that I might fill my girlish eyes with gazing, a sweet[2] delight. The warlike Myrmidons from Phthia held the right wing with fifty swift cruisers, upon whose sterns, right at the ends, stood Nereid goddesses in golden effigy, the ensign of Achilles' armament. Near these were moored the Argive ships in equal numbers, o'er which Mecisteus' son, whom Talaus his grandsire reared, and Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, were in command; next in order, Theseus' son was stationed at the head of sixty ships from Attica, having the goddess Pallas set in a winged car drawn by steeds with solid hoof, a lucky sight for mariners. Then I saw Bœotia's fleet of fifty sails decked with ensigns; these had Cadmus at the stern holding a golden dragon at the beaks of the vessels, and earth-born Leitus was their admiral. Likewise there were ships from Phocis; and from Locris came the son of Oileus with an equal contingent, leaving famed Thronium's citadel; and from Mycenæ, the Cyclopes' town, Atreus' son sent a hundred well-manned galleys, his brother[3] being with him in command, as friend with friend, that Hellas might exact vengeance on her, who had fled her home to wed a foreigner. Also I saw upon Gerenian Nestor's prows from Pylos the sign of his neighbour Alpheus, four-footed like a bull. Moreover there was a squadron of

[1] To turn the post without losing ground would require the driver to rein in his near trace-horse and let the outer one come round on a curve, "facing the turning-post."

[2] The reading *μείλινον ἀδονάν* of the MSS. cannot be right, nor are any of the proposed emendations much more probable; in the absence of anything more intelligible, Markland's *μείλιχον* is here adopted.

[3] Paley reads *ἀδελφὸς* with Markland for *Ἄδραστος* of the old copies.

twelve Enianian sail under King Gouneus; and next the lords of Elis, stationed near them, whom all the people named Epeians; and Eurytus was lord of these; likewise he led the Taphian warriors with the white oar-blades, the subjects of Meges, son of Phyleus, who had left the isles of the Echinades, where sailors cannot land. Lastly, Aias, reared in Salamis, was joining his right wing to the left[1] of those near whom he was posted, closing the line with his outermost ships—twelve barques obedient to the helm,—as I heard and then saw the crews; no safe return shall he obtain, who bringeth his barbaric boats to grapple Aias. There I saw[2] the naval armament, but some things I heard at home about the gathered host, whereof I still have a recollection.

ATT. (*as* MENELAUS *wrests a letter from him.*) Strange daring thine, Menelaus, where thou hast no right.

MEN. Stand back! thou carriest loyalty to thy master too far.

ATT. The very reproach thou hast for me is to my credit.

MEN. Thou shalt rue it, if thou meddle in matters that concern thee not.

ATT. Thou hadst no right to open a letter, which I was carrying.

MEN. No, nor thou to be carrying sorrow to all Hellas.

ATT. Argue that point with others, but surrender that letter to me.

MEN. I shall not let go.

ATT. Nor yet will I let loose my hold.

MEN. Why then, this staff of mine will be dabbling thy head with blood ere long.

ATT. To die in my master's cause were a noble death.

[1] This line is corrupt, and perhaps the next also. The attempted version follows Weil.

[2] The word ἄιον before εἰδόμαν is probably a gloss on that verb. Some editors adopt Hermann's οἷον, but there is no certainty in it.

MEN. Let go! thou art too wordy for a slave.

ATT. (*seeing* AGAMEMNON *approaching.*) Master, he is wronging me; he snatched thy letter violently from my grasp, Agamemnon, and will not heed the claims of right.

AGA. How now? what means this uproar at the gates, this indecent brawling?

MEN. My tale, not his, has the better right to be spoken.

AGA. Thou, Menelaus! what quarrel hast thou with this man, why art thou haling him hence? [*Exit* ATTENDANT.

MEN. Look me in the face! Be that the prelude to my story.

AGA. Shall I, the son of Atreus, close my eyes from fear?[1]

MEN. Seest thou this scroll, the bearer of a shameful message?

AGA. I see it, yes; and first of all surrender it.

MEN. No, not till I have shewn its contents to all the Danai.

AGA. What! hast thou broken the seal and dost know already what thou shouldst never have known?

MEN. Yes, I opened it and know to thy sorrow the secret machinations of thy heart.

AGA. Where didst thou catch my servant? Ye gods! what a shameless heart thou hast!

MEN. I was awaiting thy daughter's arrival at the camp from Argos.

AGA. What right hast thou to watch my doings? Is not this a proof of shamelessness?

MEN. My wish to do it gave the spur, for I am no slave to thee.

AGA. Infamous! Am I not to be allowed the management of my own house?

MEN. No, for thou thinkest crooked thoughts, one thing now, another formerly, and something different presently.

[1] The point lies in the play on the name Ἀτρεύς, *i.e.*, "the fearless," "shall I the son of fearlessness fear, etc.?"

AGA. Most exquisite refining on evil themes![1] A hateful thing the tongue of cleverness!

MEN. Aye, but a mind unstable is an unjust possession, disloyal to friends. Now I am anxious to test thee, and seek not thou from rage to turn aside from the truth, nor will I on my part overstrain[2] the case. Thou rememberest when thou wert all eagerness to captain the Danai against Troy, making a pretence of declining, though eager for it in thy heart; how humble thou wert then! taking each man by the hand and keeping open doors for every fellow-townsman who cared to enter, affording each in turn a chance to speak with thee, even though some desired it not, seeking by these methods to purchase popularity from all bidders; then when thou hadst secured the command, there came a change over thy manners; thou wert no longer so cordial as before to whilom friends, but hard of access, seldom to be found at home. But the man of real worth ought not to change his manners in the hour of prosperity, but should then show himself most staunch to friends, when his own good fortune can help them most effectually. This was the first cause I had to reprove thee, for it was here I first discovered thy villainy; but afterwards, when thou camest[3] to Aulis with all the gathered hosts of Hellas, thou wert of no account; no! the want of a favourable breeze filled thee with consternation at the chance dealt out by Heaven.[4] Anon the Danai began demanding that thou shouldst send the fleet away instead of vainly toiling on at Aulis; what dismay and confusion was then depicted in thy looks, to think that thou, with a thousand ships at thy command, hadst not occupied

[1] Reading εὖ κεκόμψευσαι πονηρά· with Ruhnken and Monk.

[2] Reading οὔτε καταρενῶ with Hermann.

[3] Reading ἦλθες with Monk.

[4] Nauck, following Dindorf's suggestion, regards ll. 351 and 354-5 as interpolations, foisted in to supply gaps in the MSS., and he therefore omits them, marking a lacuna after l. 353.

the plains of Priam with thy armies! And thou wouldst ask my counsel, "What am I to do? what scheme can I devise, where find one?" to save thyself being stripped of thy command and losing thy fair fame. Next when Calchas bade thee offer thy daughter in sacrifice to Artemis, declaring that the Danai should then sail, thou wert overjoyed,[1] and didst gladly undertake to offer the maid, and of thine own accord—never allege compulsion!—thou art sending word to thy wife to despatch thy daughter hither on pretence of wedding Achilles. This is the same air that heard thee say it;[2] and after all thou turnest round and hast been caught recasting thy letter to this effect, "I will no longer be my daughter's murderer." Exactly so![3] Countless others have gone through this phase in their conduct of public affairs; they make an effort while in power, and then retire dishonourably, sometimes owing to the senselessness of the citizens, sometimes deservedly, because they are too feeble of themselves to maintain their watch upon the state. For my part, I am more sorry for our unhappy Hellas, whose purpose was to read these worthless foreigners a lesson, while now she will let them escape and mock her, thanks to thee and thy daughter. May I never then appoint a man to rule my country or lead its warriors because of his kinship![4] Ability is what the general must have; since any man, with ordinary intelligence, can govern a state.[5]

[1] Line 359 is regarded by Nauck as spurious.

[2] This line was thus transposed by Paley from its usual position after l. 365.

[3] *μάλιστά γε.* L. Dindorf proposed *κάλλιστά γε*, ironical "very fine!" Both this and the previous line are omitted in Nauck's text as spurious.

[4] There is some corruption in this line; perhaps Monk's *μηδέν' οὖν γένους ἕκατι* (Nauck *ἄρα* for *οὖν*), supplies the required sense best.

[5] Following Hermann's punctuation. Monk retains the stop after *πόλεος*, "the head of the state must have sense; for every man, if so gifted, is a ruler." Hennig condemns l. 374.

CHO. For brethren to come to words and blows, whene'er they disagree, is terrible.

AGA. I wish to rebuke thee in turn,[1] briefly, not lifting mine eyes too high in shameless wise, but in more sober fashion, as a brother; for it is a good man's way to be considerate. Prithee, why this burst of fury, these bloodshot eyes? who wrongs thee? what is it thou wantest? Thou art fain to win a virtuous bride. Well, I cannot supply thee; for she, whom thou once hadst, was ill controlled by thee. Am I then, a man who never went astray, to suffer for thy sins? or is it my popularity that galls thee? No! it is the longing thou hast to keep a fair wife in thy embrace, casting reason and honour to the winds. A bad man's pleasures are like himself. Am I mad, if I change to wiser counsels, after previously deciding amiss? Thine is the madness rather in wishing to recover a wicked wife, once thou hadst lost her,—a stroke of Heaven-sent luck. Those foolish suitors swore that oath to Tyndareus in their longing to wed; but Hope was the goddess that led them on,[2] I trow, and she it was that brought it about rather than thou and thy mightiness. So take the field with them; they are ready for it[3] in the folly of their hearts; for the deity is not without insight, but is able to discern where oaths have been wrongly pledged or forcibly extorted. I will not slay my children, nor[4] shall thy interests be prospered by justice in thy vengeance for a worthless wife, while I am left wasting, night and day, in sorrow for what I did to one of my own

[1] Paley follows Markland in reading *αὖ* for MSS. *εὖ*.

[2] Reading *ἦγε ἔ'* with Matthiae for MSS. *ἡ δέ γ'*.

[3] Paley adopts Monk's *ἕτοιμοι ἔ' εἰσὶ* for *γ' οἶμαι δ' εἴσῃ*, but follows Dindorf's punctuation in not making these words parenthetical. Hermann gives *ἐγῷμαι, μωρίαν εἴσῃ φρενῶν*, "thou wilt find out their folly, I expect."

[4] In this difficult and much emended passage Lenting's *κοὐ* for *καί*, Reiske's *παρὰ δίκης*, and *τιμωρίᾳ*, dat. for nom., are the readings followed.

flesh and blood, contrary to all law and justice. There is thy answer shortly given, clear and easy to understand; and if thou wilt not come to thy senses, I shall do the best for myself.

CHO. This differs from thy previous declaration, but there is good in it,—thy child's reprieve.

MEN. Ah me, how sad my lot! I have no friends then after all.

AGA. Friends thou hast, if thou seek not their destruction.

MEN. Where wilt thou find any proof that thou art sprung from the same sire as I?

AGA. Thy moderation, not thy madness do I share by nature.

MEN. Friends should sympathize with friends in sorrow.

AGA. Claim my help by kindly service, not by paining me.

MEN. So thou hast no mind to share this trouble with Hellas?

AGA. No, Hellas is diseased like thee according to some god's design.

MEN. Go vaunt thee then on thy sceptre, after betraying thine own brother! while [1] I will seek some different means and other friends.

MES. (*entering hurriedly.*) Agamemnon, lord of all Hellenes! I am come and bring thee thy daughter, whom thou didst call Iphigenia in thy home; and her mother, thy wife Clytemnestra, is with her, and the child Orestes, a sight to gladden [2] thee after thy long absence from thy palace; but, as they had been travelling long and far, they are now refreshing their tender feet at the waters of a fair spring, they and their horses, for we turned these loose in the

[1] Lines 413-41 are regarded by Kirchhoff as the work of a much later age. Nauck incloses them in brackets, but Paley, Monk, and Hermann agree in retaining them as probably genuine.

[2] Reading ὡς τι τερφθείης with Hermann for ὥστε; if ὥστε is retained the meaning apparently is "therefore, mayst thou rejoice at seeing him," involving rather an awkward parenthesis.

grassy meadow to browse their fill; but I am come as their forerunner to prepare thee for their reception; for the army knows already of thy daughter's arrival, so quickly did the rumour spread: and all the folk are running together to the sight, that they may see thy child; for Fortune's favourites enjoy a world-wide fame and have all eyes fixed on them. "Is it a wedding"? some ask, "or what is happening? or has king Agamemnon from fond yearning summoned his daughter hither?" From others thou wouldst have heard: "They are presenting the maiden to Artemis, queen of Aulis, previous to marriage; who can the bridegroom be, that is to lead her home?"

Come, then, begin the rites,—that is the next step,—by getting the baskets ready; crown your heads; prepare the wedding-hymn, thou and[1] prince Menelaus with thee; let flutes resound throughout the tents with noise of dancer's feet; for this is a happy day, that is come for the maid.

AGA. Thou hast my thanks; now go within; for the rest it will be well, as Fate proceeds. [*Exit* MESSENGER.

Ah, woe is me! unhappy wretch, what can I say? where shall I begin? Into what cruel straits have I been plunged! Fortune has outwitted me, proving far cleverer than any cunning of mine. What an advantage humble birth possesses! for it is easy for her sons to weep and tell out all their sorrows; while to the high-born man come these same sorrows, but we have dignity throned o'er our life and are the people's slaves.[2] I, for instance, am ashamed to weep, nor less, poor wretch, to check my tears at the awful pass to

[1] τε was added by Hermann, because Menelaus could only be invited to take part in the ceremony as an assistant, all important duties devolving on the bride's parents.

[2] The meaning seems to be that though both classes have the same sorrows, the high-born are prevented by their sense of dignity from giving way to any outward expression of them for their relief. In l. 450 ὄγκον, the reading restored from Plutarch, is followed rather than the *old* δῆμον.

which I am brought. Oh! what am I to tell my wife? how shall I welcome her? with what face meet her? for she too has undone me by coming uninvited in this my hour of sorrow; yet it was but natural she should come with her daughter to prepare the bride and perform the fondest duties, where she will discover my villainy. And for this poor maid—, why maid? Death, methinks, will soon make her his bride;—how I pity her! Thus will she plead to me, I trow; "My father will thou slay me? Be such the wedding thou thyself mayst find, and whosoever is a friend to thee"! while Orestes, from his station near us, will cry in childish accents, inarticulate, yet fraught with meaning. Alas! to what utter ruin Paris, the son of Priam, the cause of these troubles, has brought me by his union with Helen!

CHO. I pity her myself, in such wise as a woman, and she a stranger, may bemoan the misfortunes of royalty.

MEN. (*offering his hand.*) Thy hand, brother! let me grasp it.

AGA. I give it; thine is the victory, mine the sorrow.

MEN. By Pelops our reputed grandsire and Atreus our father I swear to tell thee the truth from my heart, without any covert purpose, but only what I think. The sight of thee in tears made me pity thee, and in return I shed a tear for thee myself; I withdraw from my former proposals, ceasing to be a cause of fear to thee; yea, and I will put myself in thy present position;[1] and I counsel thee, slay not thy child nor prefer my interests to thine; for it is not just that thou shouldst grieve, while I am glad, or that thy children should die, while mine still see the light of day. What is it, after all, I seek? If I am set on marriage, could I not find a bride as choice elsewhere? Was I to lose a brother,—the last I should have lost,—to win a Helen, getting bad for good? I was mad, impetuous as a youth, till

[1] Reading εἶμι of MSS. Kirchhoff proposed εἰμί, *i.e.*, "I share thy views."

I perceived, on closer view, what slaying children really meant. Moreover I am filled with compassion for the hapless maiden, doomed to bleed that I may wed, when I reflect that we are kin. What has thy daughter to do with Helen? Let the army be disbanded and leave Aulis; dry those streaming eyes, brother, and provoke me not to tears. Whatever concern *thou* hast in oracles that affect thy child, let it be none of mine; into thy hands I resign my share therein. A sudden change, thou'lt say, from my fell proposals! A natural course for me; affection for my brother caused the change. These are the ways of a man not void of virtue, to pursue on each occasion what is best.

CHO. A generous speech, worthy of Tantalus, the son of Zeus! Thou dost not shame thy ancestry.

AGA. I thank thee, Menelaus, for this unexpected suggestion; 'tis an honourable proposal, worthy of thee.

MEN. Sometimes love, sometimes the selfishness of their families causes a quarrel between brothers; I loathe a relationship of this kind which is bitterness to both.[1]

AGA. 'Tis useless, for circumstances compel me to carry out the murderous sacrifice of my daughter.

MEN. How so? who will compel thee to slay thine own child?

AGA. The whole Achæan army here assembled.

MEN. Not if thou send her back to Argos.

AGA. I might do that unnoticed, but there will be another thing I cannot.

MEN. What is that? Thou must not fear the mob too much.

AGA. Calchas will tell the Argive host his oracles.

MEN. Not if he be killed ere that,—an easy matter.

[1] Lines 508-10 are rejected by most editors as an interpolation; omitting them, Agamemnon's speech goes on naturally at l. 511. Hermann, retaining them, replaces γε by δὲ and continues them to Agamemnon.

AGA. The whole tribe of seers is a curse with its ambition.

MEN. Yes, and good for nothing and useless, when amongst us.

AGA. Has the thought, which is rising in my mind, no terrors for thee?

MEN. How can I understand thy meaning, unless thou declare it?

AGA. The son of Sisyphus knows all.

MEN. Odysseus cannot possibly hurt us.

AGA. He was ever shifty by nature, siding with the mob.

MEN. True, he is enslaved by the love of popularity, a fearful evil.

AGA. Bethink thee then, will he not arise among the Argives and tell them the oracles that Calchas delivered, saying of me that I undertook to offer Artemis a victim, and after all am proving false? Then, when he has carried the army away with him, he will bid the Argives slay us and sacrifice the maiden; and if I escape to Argos, they will come and destroy the place, razing it to the ground, Cyclopean walls and all. That is my trouble. Woe is me! to what straits Heaven has brought me at this pass! Take one precaution for me, Menelaus, as thou goest through the host, that Clytemnestra learn this not, till I have taken my child and devoted her to death, that my affliction may be attended with the fewest tears. (*Turning to the* CHORUS.) And you, ye stranger dames, keep silence. [*Exit* MENELAUS.

CHO. Happy they who find the goddess come in moderate might, sharing with self-restraint in Aphrodite's gift of marriage and enjoying calm and rest from frenzied passions, wherein the Love-god, golden-haired, stretches his charmèd bow with arrows twain, and one is aimed at happiness, the other at life's confusion. O lady Cypris, queen of beauty! far from my bridal bower I ban the last. Be mine delight in moderation and pure desires, and may I have a share in love, but shun excess therein!

Men's natures vary, and their habits differ, but true virtue is always manifest. Likewise the training that comes of education conduces greatly to virtue; for not only is modesty wisdom, but it has also the rare grace[1] of seeing by its better judgment what is right; whereby a glory, ever young, is shed o'er life by reputation. A great thing it is to follow
7 virtue's footsteps,—for women in their secret loves; while in men again an inborn sense of order, shown in countless ways,[2] adds to a city's greatness.

[Thou camest, O Paris, to the place where thou wert reared to herd the kine amid the white heifers of Ida, piping in foreign strain and breathing on thy reeds an echo of the Phrygian airs Olympus played. Full-uddered cows were browsing at the spot where[3] that verdict 'twixt goddesses was awaiting thee,—the cause of thy going to Hellas to stand before the ivory palace, kindling love in Helen's trancèd eyes and feeling its flutter in thine own breast; whence the fiend of strife brought Hellas with her chivalry and ships to the towers of Troy.

Oh! great is the bliss the great enjoy. Behold Iphigenia, the king's royal child, and Clytemnestra, the daughter of Tyndareus; how proud their lineage! how high their pinnacle of fortune! These mighty ones, whom wealth attends, are very gods in the eyes of less favoured folk.

Halt we here, maidens of Chalcis, and lift the queen from her chariot to the ground without stumbling, supporting her gently in our arms, with kind intent, that the renowned daughter of Agamemnon but just arrived may feel no fear;

[1] ἐξαλλάσσουσαν χάριν. Liddell and Scott render as above. Paley follows Hermann in rendering "a compensating pleasure." The whole of this chorus is so full, however, of corruption, and possibly interpolation, that it is not unlikely that this phrase was not of Euripides' coining.

[2] Reading κόσμος ἐνὼν ὁ μυριοπλήθης with Markland, but here again it is hopeless to recover the true reading.

[3] Reading ὅθι with Hartung.

strangers ourselves, avoid we aught that may disturb or frighten the strangers from Argos.][1]

CLY. I take this as a lucky omen, thy kindness and auspicious greeting, and have good hope that it is to a happy marriage I conduct the bride. (*To Attendants.*) Take from the chariot the dowry I am bringing for my daughter and convey it within with careful heed.

My daughter, leave the horse-drawn car, planting thy faltering footstep delicately.[2] (*To the* CHORUS.) Maidens,[3] take her in your arms and lift her from the chariot, and let one of you give me the support of her hand, that I may quit my seat in the carriage with fitting grace.

[Some of you stand at the horses' heads; for the horse has a timid eye, easily frightened; here take this child Orestes, son of Agamemnon, babe as he still is.

What! sleeping, little one, tired out by thy ride in the chariot? Awake to bless thy sister's wedding; for thou, my gallant boy, shalt get by this marriage a kinsman gallant as thyself, the Nereid's godlike offspring. Come hither to thy mother, my daughter, Iphigenia, and seat thyself beside me, and stationed near show my happiness to these strangers; yes, come hither and welcome the sire thou lovest so dearly.][4]

Hail! my honoured lord, king Agamemnon! we have obeyed thy commands and are come.[5]

[1] The whole passage from l. 574-606 is regarded by Paley and Dindorf as an interpolation; while most editors concur in regarding ll. 599-606 as undoubtedly spurious.

[2] *κῶλον ἀσθενὲς θ' ἅμα*, but Hermann's *κῶλόν ἀσφαλῶς χαμαί* is tempting.

[3] *νεάνιδές, νίν* so Pierson for *νεανίδαισιν*.

[4] The passages inclosed in brackets are regarded by Paley and Dindorf, and, in the main, by Kirchhoff, as spurious. Monk only omits ll. 627-30, and ll. 635-7.

[5] These two lines were placed here by Porson instead of after the next distich; the same critic read *προσβαλῶ* and *περιβαλεῖν* instead of *περιβαλῶ* and *προσβαλεῖν*; both of which changes are followed in the

[IPH. (*throwing herself into* AGAMEMNON'S *arms.*) Be not wroth with me, mother, if I run from thy side and throw myself on my father's breast.

O my father! I long to outrun others and embrace thee after this long while; for I yearn to see thy face; be not wroth with me.

CLY. Thou mayst do so, daughter; for of all the children I have born, thou hast ever loved thy father best.]

IPH. I see thee, father, joyfully after a long season.

AGA. And I thy father thee; thy words do equal duty for both of us.

IPH. All hail, father! thou didst well in bringing me hither to thee.

AGA. I know not how I am to say yes or no to that, my child.

IPH. Ha! how wildly thou art looking, spite of thy joy at seeing me.

AGA. A man has many cares when he is king and general too.

IPH. Be mine, all mine to-day; turn not unto moody thoughts.

AGA. Why so I am, all thine to-day; I have no other thought.

IPH. Then smooth thy knitted brow, unbend and smile.

AGA. Lo! my child, my joy at seeing thee is even as it is.

IPH. And hast thou then the tear-drop streaming from thy eyes?

AGA. Aye, for long is the absence from each other, that awaits us.

IPH. I know not, dear father mine, I know not of what thou art speaking.[1]

translation, though Paley, while mentioning the second, has not actually adopted it in his text.

[1] This line is corrupt, though the sense, so far, is preserved. Dindorf suspects ll. 652-5, and it certainly is difficult to see the connection

AGA. Thou art moving my pity all the more by speaking so sensibly.

IPH. My words shall turn to senselessness, if that will cheer thee more.

AGA. (*Aside.*) Ah, woe is me! this silence is too much. (*To* IPHIGENIA.) Thou hast my thanks.

IPH. Stay with thy children at home, father.

AGA. My own wish![1] but to my sorrow I may not humour it.

IPH. Ruin seize their warring and the woes of Menelaus!

AGA. First will that, which has been my life-long ruin, bring ruin unto others.[2]

IPH. How long thou wert absent in the bays of Aulis!

AGA. Aye, and there is still a hindrance to my sending the army forward.

IPH. Where do men say the Phrygians live, father?

AGA. In a land where I would Paris, the son of Priam, ne'er had dwelt.

IPH. 'Tis a long voyage thou art bound on, father, after thou leavest me.

[AGA. Thou wilt meet thy father again, my daughter.

IPH. Ah! would it were seemly that thou shouldst take me as a fellow-voyager!][3]

AGA. Thou too hast[4] a voyage to make to a haven where thou wilt remember thy father.

of l. 652 with what precedes. Paley suggests that several lines have been lost.

[1] *θέλω γε· τὸ θέλειν δ'*, but the words are probably corrupt.

[2] *ἄλλους ὀλεῖ πρόσθ' ἀμὲ διολέσαντ' ἔχει.* None of the various proposed emendations are great improvements on this reading of Porson's, though it is hardly likely that this is what Euripides wrote.

[3] These two lines, 665-6 are corrupt, probably interpolated, in Paley's opinion. Omitting them, l. 667 comes in very properly. To obtain any sense in the first of them, Weil's correction, *ἐς ταὐτὸν αὖθις,' ὦ θύγατερ, ἥξεις πατρί* has been adopted; the meaning being, "we shall meet after death."

[4] Reading *ἀλλ' ἔστι*, Hermann's correction for MSS. *αἰτεῖς τι*.

IPH. Shall I sail thither with my mother or alone?

AGA. All alone, without father or mother.

IPH. What! hast thou found me a new home, father?

AGA. Enough of this! 'tis not for girls to know such things.

IPH. Speed home from Troy, I pray thee, father, as soon as thou hast triumphed there.

AGA. There is a sacrifice I have first to offer here.

IPH. Yea, 'tis thy duty to heed religion with aid of holy rites.[1]

AGA. Thou wilt witness it, for thou wilt be standing near the laver.

IPH. Am I to lead the dance then round the altar, father?

AGA. (*Aside.*) I count thee happier than myself because thou knowest nothing. (*To* IPHIGENIA.) Go within into the presence of maidens, after thou hast given me thy hand and one sad kiss, on the eve of thy lengthy sojourn far from thy father's side.

Bosom, cheek, and golden hair! ah, how grievous ye have found Helen and the Phrygians' city! I can no more; the tears come welling to my eyes, the moment I touch thee.

[*Exit* IPHIGENIA.

(*Turning to* CLYTEMNESTRA.) Herein I crave thy pardon, daughter of Leda, if I showed excessive grief at the thought of resigning my daughter to Achilles; for though we are sending her to taste of bliss, still it wrings a parent's heart, when he, the father who has toiled so hard for them, commits his children to the homes of strangers.

CLY. I am not so void of sense; bethink thee, I shall go through this as well, when I lead the maiden from the chamber to the sound of the marriage-hymn; wherefore I chide thee not; but custom will combine with time to make the smart grow less.

As touching him, to whom thou hast betrothed our

[1] Monk interprets "in a matter of religion thou must consult the *riests.*" Paley inclines to the view that ll. 674-7 are interpolated.

daughter, I know his name, 'tis true, but would fain learn his lineage and the land of his birth.

AGA. There was one Ægina, the daughter of Asopus.

CLY. Who wedded her? some mortal or a god?

AGA. Zeus, and she bare Æacus, the prince of Œnone.[1]

CLY. What son of Æacus secured his father's halls?

AGA. Peleus, who wedded the daughter of Nereus.

CLY. With the god's consent, or when he had taken her in spite of gods?

AGA. Zeus betrothed her, and her guardian gave consent.

CLY. Where did he marry her? amid the billows of the sea?

AGA. In Chiron's home, at sacred Pelion's foot.

CLY. What! the abode ascribed to the race of Centaurs?

AGA. It was there the gods celebrated the marriage-feast of Peleus.

CLY. Did Thetis or his father train Achilles?

AGA. Chiron brought him up, to prevent his learning the ways of the wicked.

CLY. Ah! wise the teacher, still wiser the father, who intrusted his son to such hands.

AGA. Such is the future husband of thy daughter.

CLY. A blameless lord; but what city in Hellas is his?

AGA. He dwells on the banks of the river Apidanus, in the borders of Phthia.

CLY. Wilt thou convey[2] our daughter thither?

AGA. He who takes her to himself will see to that.

CLY. Happiness attend the pair! Which day will he marry her?

AGA. As soon as the full moon comes to give its blessing.

CLY. Hast thou already offered the goddess a sacrifice to usher in the maiden's marriage?

[1] The old name of Ægina.

[2] ἀπάξεις, so Dobree for ἀπάξει.

AGA. I am about to do so; that is the very thing I was engaged in.

CLY. Wilt thou celebrate the marriage-feast thereafter?

AGA. Yes, when I have offered a sacrifice required by Heaven of me.

CLY. But where am I to make ready the feast for the women?

AGA. Here beside our gallant Argive ships.

CLY. Finely here! but still I must;[1] good come of it for all that!

AGA. I will tell thee, lady, what to do; so obey me now.

CLY. Wherein? for I was ever wont to yield thee obedience.

AGA. Here, where the bridegroom is, will I—

CLY. Which of my duties will ye perform in the mother's absence?

AGA. Give thy child away with help of Danai.

CLY. And where am I to be the while?

AGA. Get thee to Argos, and take care of thy unwedded daughters.

CLY. And leave my child? Then who will raise her bridal torch?

AGA. I will provide the proper wedding torch.

CLY. That is not the custom; but thou thinkest lightly of these things.

AGA. It is not good thou shouldst be alone among a soldier-crowd.

CLY. It is good that a mother should give her own child away.

AGA. Aye, and that those maidens at home should not be left alone.

CLY. They are in safe keeping, pent in their maiden-bowers.

[1] Reading καλῶς γ', ἀναγκαίως δὲ', as Paley edits on his own correction.

AGA. Obey.

CLY. Nay, by the goddess-queen of Argos! go, manage matters out of doors; but in the house it is my place [to decide what is proper for maidens at their wedding.] [1]

AGA. Woe is me! my efforts are baffled; I am disappointed in my hope, anxious as I was to get my wife out of sight; foiled at every point, I form my plots and subtle schemes against my best-beloved. [But I will go, in spite of all, with Calchas the priest, to inquire the goddess's good pleasure, fraught with ill-luck as it is to me, and with trouble to Hellas.] [2] He who is wise should keep in his house a good and useful wife or none at all.

CHO. They say the Hellenes' gathered host will come in arms aboard their ships to Simois with its silver eddies, even to Ilium, the plain of Troy beloved by Phœbus; where famed Cassandra, I am told, whene'er the god's resistless prophecies inspire her, wildly tosses her golden tresses, wreathed with crown of verdant bay. And on the towers of Troy and round her walls shall Trojans stand, when sea-borne troops with brazen shields row in on shapely ships to the channels of the Simois, eager to take Helen, the sister of that heavenly pair whom Zeus begat, from Priam, and bear her back to Hellas by toil of Achæa's shields and spears; encircling Pergamus, the Phrygians' town, with murderous war around her stone-built towers, dragging men's heads backward to cut their throats, and sacking the citadel of Troy [3] from roof to base, a cause of many tears to maids and Priam's wife;

[1] This line is rejected by Monk as spurious; Hermann proposes to read *νυμφίοισι παρθένων*, and without some such emendation it is difficult to find any meaning in it.

[2] Lines 746-8 are rejected by Monk, whom most editors follow.

[3] The words *πόλισμα Τροίας* are omitted by Monk as a gloss on *πόλιν*. Hartung regards ll. 773-83 as interpolated, and there is certainly much in them that Euripides can scarcely have written; both Dindorf and Kirchhoff reject large portions of what follows l. 773.

and Helen, the daughter of Zeus, shall[1] weep in bitter grief, because she left her lord.

Oh! ne'er may there appear to me or to my children's children the prospect which the wealthy Lydian dames and Phrygia's brides will have,[2] as at their looms they hold converse: "Say who will pluck this fair blossom from her ruined country, tightening his grasp on lovely tresses till the tears flow? 'Tis all through thee, the offspring of the long-necked swan; if indeed it be a true report that Leda bare[3] thee to a winged bird, when Zeus transformed himself thereto, or whether, in the pages of the poets, fables have carried these tales to men's ears idly, out of season."

ACH. Where in these tents is Achæa's general? Which of his servants will announce to him that Achilles, the son of Peleus, is at his gates seeking him? For this delay at the Euripus is not the same for all of us; there be some, for instance, who, though still unwed, have left their houses desolate and are idling here upon the beach, while others are married and have children;[4] so strange the longing for this expedition that has fallen on their hearts by Heaven's will.[5] My own just plea must I declare, and whoso else hath any wish will speak for himself. Though I have left Pharsalia and Peleus, still I linger[6] here by reason of these light breezes at the Euripus, restraining my Myrmidons, while they are ever instant with me saying, "Why do we tarry, Achilles? how much longer must we count the days to the start for Ilium? do something, if thou art so minded; else lead home thy men, and wait not for the tardy action of these Atridæ."

[1] *ἐσεῖται.* Hermann gives *εἴσεται*, "shall know to her cost."

[2] Perhaps Tyrrwhitt's *σχήσουσι* should be read for *στήσουσι*.

[3] Reading *ἔτεκεν* with Musgrave for *ἔτυχεν*.

[4] Reading *καὶ παῖδας* with Musgrave for *ἄπαιδες*.

[5] *τῆσδε στρατείας οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινός.* Hennig rejects ll. 805-9.

[6] Kirchhoff marks a lacuna of three lines after l. 812 on the authority of one MS.; it is possible, however, that the passage is continuous, and an attempt has been made here to treat it as such.

CLY. Hail to thee, son of the Nereid goddess! I heard thy voice from within the tent and therefore came forth.

ACH. O modesty revered! who can this lady be whom I behold, so richly dowered with beauty's gifts?

CLY. No wonder thou knowest me not, seeing I am one thou hast never before set eyes on; I praise thy reverent address to modesty.

ACH. Who art thou, and wherefore art thou come to the mustering of the Danai,—thou, a woman, to a fenced camp of men?

CLY. The daughter of Leda I; my name Clytemnestra; and my husband king Agamemnon.

ACH. Well and shortly answered on all important points! but it ill befits that I should stand talking to women.

CLY. Stay; why seek to fly? give me thy hand, a prelude to a happy marriage.

ACH. What is it thou sayest? I give thee my hand? Were I to lay a finger where I have no right, I could ne'er meet Agamemnon's eye.

CLY. The best of rights hast thou, seeing it is my child thou wilt wed, O son of the sea-goddess, whom Nereus begat.

ACH. What wedding dost thou speak of? words fail me, lady; can thy wits have gone astray and art thou inventing this?

CLY. All men are naturally shy in the presence of new relations, when these remind[1] them of their wedding.

ACH. Lady, I have never wooed daughter of thine, nor have the sons of Atreus ever mentioned marriage to me.

CLY. What can it mean? thy turn now to marvel at my words, for thine are passing strange to me.

ACH. Hazard a guess; that we can both do in this

[1] *μεμνημένους*, so Hermann and Dindorf; if *μεμνημένοις* be retained from the MSS., the meaning must be "when they call their marriage to mind"; the latter is preferred by Kirchhoff and Monk.

matter; for it may be we are both correct in our statements.[1]

CLY. What! have I suffered such indignity? The marriage I am courting has no reality, it seems; I am ashamed of it.

ACH. Some one perhaps has made a mock of thee and me; pay no heed thereto; make light of it.

CLY. Farewell; I can no longer face thee with unfaltering eyes, after being made a liar and suffering this indignity.

ACH. 'Tis "farewell" too I bid thee, lady; and now I go within the tent to seek thy husband.

ATT. (*calling through the tent-door.*) Stranger of the race of Æacus, stay awhile! Ho there! thee I mean, O goddess-born, and thee, daughter of Leda.

ACH. Who is it calling through the half-opened door? what fear his voice betrays!

ATT. A slave am I; of that I am not proud, for fortune permits it not.

ACH. Whose slave art thou? not mine; for mine and Agamemnon's goods are separate.

ATT. I belong to this lady who stands before the tent, a gift to her from Tyndareus her father.

ACH. I am waiting; tell me, if thou art desirous, why thou hast stayed me.

ATT. Are ye really all alone here at the door?

CLY. To us alone wilt thou address thyself; come forth from the king's tent.

ATT. (*coming out.*) O Fortune and my own foresight, preserve whom I desire!

ACH. That speech will save[2] them—in the future; it has a certain pompous air.

[1] *i.e.*, we may both be right, but at cross purposes. Markland proposes ἐψευδόμεθα, "we may both have been deceived in what we say."

[2] Reading σώσει, Monk's correction for ἂν ὥσῃ. Others read ἀνοίσει with Markland, or ὀνήσει with Böckh.

CLY. Delay not for the sake of touching my right hand, if there is aught that thou wouldst say to me.

ATT. Well, thou knowest my character and my devotion to thee and thy children.

CLY. I know thou hast grown old in the service of my house.

ATT. Likewise thou knowest it was in thy dowry king Agamemnon received me.

CLY. Yes, thou camest to Argos with me, and hast been mine this long time past.

ATT. True; and though I bear thee all goodwill, I like not thy lord so well.

CLY. Come, come, unfold whate'er thou hast to say.

ATT. Her father, he that begat her, is on the point of slaying thy daughter with his own hand—

CLY. How? Out upon thy story, old dotard! thou art mad.

ATT. Severing with a sword the hapless maid's white throat.

CLY. Ah, woe is me! Is my husband haply mad?

ATT. Nay; sane, except where thou and thy daughter are concerned; there he is mad.

CLY. What is his reason? what vengeful fiend impels him?

ATT. Oracles,—at least so Calchas says, in order that the host may start—

CLY. Whither? Woe is me, and woe is thee, thy father's destined victim!

ATT. To the halls of Dardanus, that Menelaus may recover Helen.

CLY. So Helen's return then was fated to affect Iphigenia?

ATT. Thou knowest all; her father is about to offer thy child to Artemis.

CLY. But that marriage,—what pretext had it for bringing me from home?

ATT. An inducement to thee to bring thy daughter cheerfully, to wed her to Achilles.

CLY. On a deadly errand art thou come, my daughter, both thou, and I, thy mother.

ATT. Piteous the lot of both of you,—and fearful Agamemnon's venture.

CLY. Alas! I am undone; my eyes can no longer stem their tears.

ATT. What more natural [1] than to weep the loss of thy children?

CLY. Whence, old man, dost say thou hadst this news?

ATT. I had started to carry thee a letter referring to the former writing.

CLY. Forbidding or combining to urge my bringing the child to her death?

ATT. Nay, forbidding it, for thy lord was then in his sober senses.

CLY. How comes it then, if thou wert really bringing me a letter, that thou dost not now deliver it into my hands?

ATT. Menelaus snatched it from me,—he who caused this trouble.

CLY. Dost thou hear that, son of Peleus, the Nereid's child?

ACH. I have been listening to the tale of thy sufferings, and I am indignant to think I was used as a tool.

CLY. They will slay my child; they have tricked her with thy marriage.

ACH. Like thee I blame thy lord, nor do I view it with mere indifference.

CLY. [No longer will I let shame [2] prevent my kneeling

[1] Reading with Wecklein εἴπερ ἀλλ' εἰκὸς. Paley retains the old reading εἴπερ ἀλγεινὸν. Hartung gives οὐ γὰρ ἄλογόν ἐστι. Kirchhoff οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' εἰκὸς.

[2] Reading οὐκέτ' αἰδεσθησόμεσθα, a conjecture of Nauck and Hermann's. Paley regards ll. 900-2 as spurious.

to thee, a mortal to one goddess-born; why do I affect reserve? whose interests should I consult before my child's?] (*Throwing herself before* ACHILLES.) Oh! help me, goddess-born, in my sore distress, and her that was called thy bride, —in vain, 'tis true, yet called she was. For thee it was I wreathed her head and led her forth as if to marriage, but now it is to slaughter I am bringing her. On thee will come reproach because thou didst not help her; for though not wedded to her, yet wert thou the loving husband of my hapless maid in name at any rate. By thy beard, right hand, and mother too I do implore thee; for thy name it was that worked my ruin, and thou art bound to stand by that. Except thy knees I have no altar whereunto to fly; and not a friend stands[1] at my side. Thou hast heard the cruel abandoned scheme of Agamemnon; and I, a woman, am come, as thou seest, to a camp of lawless sailor-folk, bold in evil's cause, though useful when they list; wherefore if thou boldly stretch forth thine arm in my behalf, our safety is assured; but if thou withhold it, we are lost.

CHO. A wondrous thing is motherhood, carrying with it a potent spell, wherein all share, so that for their children's sake they will endure affliction.

ACH.[2] My proud spirit is stirred to range aloft, but it has learnt to grieve in misfortune and rejoice in high prosperity with equal moderation. [For these are the men who can count on ordering all their life aright by wisdom's rules.

[1] Reading πέλας with Markland for MSS. γελᾷ, a conjecture adopted by Hermann and Monk.

[2] On the following speech Paley has this remark: "there are very grave reasons for doubting whether the genuine speech of Achilles has not been superseded, either wholly or in part, by the verses of a cunning imitator." The reasoning throughout is extremely difficult to follow, if indeed possible, and there are numerous exceptional phrases. Dindorf incloses large portions of this speech in brackets, but it is hard to see why he decides one part to be more suspicious than another.

True, there are cases where 'tis pleasant not to be too wise, but there are others, where some store of wisdom helps.] Brought up in godly Chiron's halls myself, I learnt to keep a single heart; and provided the Atridæ lead aright, I will obey them; but when they cease therefrom, no more will I obey. Nay, but here and in Troy I will show the freedom of my nature, and, as far as in me lies, do honour to Ares with my spear. [Thee, lady, who hast suffered so cruelly from thy nearest and dearest, will I, by every effort in a young man's power, set right, investing thee with that amount of pity,] and never shall thy daughter, after being once called my bride, die by her father's hand; for I will not lend myself to thy husband's subtle tricks; no! for it will be my name that kills thy child, although it wieldeth not the steel. Thy own husband is the actual cause, but I shall no longer be guiltless, if, because of me and my marriage, this maiden perishes, [she that hath suffered past endurance and been the victim of affronts most strangely undeserved. So am I made the poorest wretch in Argos; I a thing of naught, and Menelaus counting for a man! No son of Peleus I, but the issue of a vengeful fiend, if my name shall [1] serve thy husband for the murder. Nay! by Nereus, who begat my mother Thetis, in his home amid the flowing waves, never shall king Agamemnon touch thy daughter, no! not even to the laying of a finger-tip upon her robe; else will Sipylus,[2] that frontier town of barbarism, the cradle of those chieftains' line, be henceforth a city indeed, while Phthia's name will nowhere find mention. Calchas, the seer, shall rue beginning the sacrifice with his barley-meal and lustral water. Why, what is a seer? A man who with luck tells the truth sometimes, with frequent falsehoods, but when his luck

[1] Reading φονεύσει with Schäfer.

[2] A mountain in Lydia, near which was shown the grave of Tantalus, the ancestor of the Atridæ; the town of the same name was swallowed up in very early times by an earthquake.

deserts him, collapses then and there. It is not to secure a bride that I have spoken thus,—there be maids unnumbered eager to have my love,[1]—no! but king Agamemnon has put an insult on me; he should have asked my leave to use my name as a means to catch the child, for it was I[2] chiefly who induced Clytemnestra to betroth her daughter to me; verily I had yielded this to Hellas, if that was where our going to Ilium broke down; I would never have refused to further my fellow-soldiers' common interest. But, as it is, I am as naught in the eyes of those chieftains, and little they reck of treating me well or ill. My sword shall soon know if any one is to snatch thy daughter from me, for then will I make it reek with the bloody stains of slaughter, ere it reach Phrygia.[3] Calm thyself then; as a god in his might I appeared to thee, without being so, but such will I show myself for all that.

CHO. Son of Peleus, thy words are alike worthy of thee and that sea-born deity, the holy goddess.]

CLY. Ah! would I could find words to utter thy praise without excess, and yet not lose the graciousness thereof by stinting it; for when the good are praised, they have a feeling, as it were, of hatred for those who in their praise exceed the mean. But I am ashamed of intruding a tale of woe, since my affliction touches myself alone and thou art not affected by troubles of mine; but still it looks well for the

[1] Reading *οὐ* for *ἤ*, and regarding *μυρίαι—τοὐμὸν* as parenthetical, which in the main is the view taken by Nauck and Klotz of this very unsatisfactory passage. Paley, regarding it as an interpolation, disdains to emend it.

[2] *i.e.*, it was my rank, etc., as described by Agamemnon, that carried the day, and, such being the case, I ought to have had some voice in the matter. (Paley.)

[3] Porson, whom Monk follows, corrects this passage thus:

ὄν, πρὶν εἰσ Φρύγας
ἐλθεῖν φόνον, κηλῖσιν αἵματος χρανῶ,

an ingenious but not absolutely necessary emendation.

man of worth to assist the unfortunate, even when he is not connected with them. Wherefore pity us, for our sufferings cry for pity; in the first place, I have harboured an idle hope in thinking to have thee wed my daughter; and next, perhaps, the slaying of my child will be to thee an evil omen in thy wooing hereafter, against which thou must guard thyself. Thy words were good, both first and last; for if thou will it so, my daughter will be saved. Wilt have her clasp thy knees in suppliant wise? 'Tis no maid's part; yet if it seem good to thee, why come she shall with the modest look of free-born maid; but if I shall obtain the self-same end from thee without her coming, then let her abide within, for there is dignity in her reserve; still reserve must only go as far as the case allows.

[ACH.[1] Bring not thou thy daughter out for me to see, lady, nor let us incur the reproach of the ignorant; for an army, when gathered together without domestic duties to employ it, loves the evil gossip of malicious tongues. After all, should ye supplicate me, ye will attain a like result as if I had ne'er been supplicated[2]; for I am myself engaged in a mighty struggle to rid you of your troubles. One thing be sure thou hast heard; I will not tell a lie; if I do that or idly mock thee, may I die, but live if I preserve the maid.

CLY. Bless thee for ever succouring the distressed!

ACH. Hearken then to me, that the matter may succeed.

CLY. What is thy proposal? for hear thee I must.

ACH. Let us once more urge[3] her father to a better frame of mind.

CLY. He is something of a coward, and fears the army too much.

[1] Paley regards ll. 998-1035 as spurious, pointing out much, that, in his opinion, stamps them as the work of a later hand.

[2] Reading ἦν for ἧς, as Paley suggests; Nauck gives ἀνικετεύτως' εἰ ς, to avoid the un-Attic εἰ . . . ἧς.

[3] Reading πείθωμεν.

ACH. Still argument o'erthroweth argument.

CLY. Cold hope indeed; but tell me what I must do.

ACH. Entreat him first not to slay his children, and if he is stubborn, come to me. For[1] if he consents to thy request, my intervention need go no further, since this consent insures thy safety. I too shall show myself in a better light to my friend, and the army will not blame me, if I arrange the matter by reason rather than force; while, should things turn out well, the result will prove satisfactory both to thee and thy friends, even without my interference.

CLY. How sensibly thou speakest! I must act as seemeth best to thee; but should I fail of my object, where am I to see thee again? whither must I turn my wretched steps and find thee ready to champion my distress?

ACH. I am keeping watch to guard thee, where occasion calls, that none see thee passing through the host of Danai with that scared look. Shame not thy father's house; for Tyndareus deserveth not to be ill spoken of, being a mighty man in Hellas.[2]

CLY. 'Tis even so.[3] Command me; I must play the slave to thee. If there are gods, thou for thy righteous dealing wilt find them favourable; if there are none, what need to toil?]

[*Exeunt* ACHILLES *and* CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHO. What wedding-hymn was that which raised its strains to the sound of Libyan flutes, to the music of the dancer's lyre, and the note of the pipe of reeds?

'Twas in the day Pieria's fair-tressed choir came o'er the slopes of Pelion to the marriage-feast of Peleus, beating the ground with print of golden sandals at the banquet of the gods, and hymning in dulcet strains the praise of Thetis and

[1] Dindorf marks ll. 1017-23 as spurious; "the only wonder is," says Paley, "that he tolerated the preceding part."

[2] Line 1032 is inclosed in brackets by Nauck.

[3] ἔστιν τάδ'. So Paley; but others, with Markland, read ἔσται τάδ' *i.e.*, "I will do as you say."

the son of Æacus, o'er the Centaurs' hill, down through the woods of Pelion.

There was the Dardanian boy, Phrygian Ganymede, whom Zeus delights to honour, drawing off the wine he mixed in the depths of golden bowls; while, along the gleaming sand, the fifty daughters of Nereus graced the marriage with their dancing, circling in a mazy ring.

Came too the revel-rout of Centaurs, mounted on horses, to the feast of the gods and the mixing-bowl of Bacchus, leaning on fir-trees, with[1] wreaths of green foliage round their heads; and loudly cried the prophet Chiron, skilled in arts inspired by Phœbus; "Daughter of Nereus, thou shalt bear a son,"—whose name he gave;—"a dazzling light to Thessaly; for he shall come with an army of Myrmidon spearmen to the far-famed land of Priam, to set it in a blaze, his body cased in a suit of golden mail forged by Hephæstus, a gift from his goddess-mother, even from Thetis who bore him."

Then shed the gods a blessing on the marriage of the high-born bride, who was first of Nereus' daughters, and on the wedding of Peleus. But thee[2] will Argives crown, wreathing the lovely tresses of thy hair, like a dappled[3] mountain hind brought from some rocky cave or a heifer undefiled, and staining with blood thy human throat; though thou wert never reared like these amid the piping and whistling of herdsmen, but at thy mother's side, to be decked one day by her as the bride of a son of Inachus. [[4] 'Where now does the face of modesty or virtue avail aught?' seeing that godlessness holds sway, and virtue is neglected

[1] Reading ἀνὰ δ' ἐλάταις σὺν with Weil.

[2] *i.e.*, Iphigenia.

[3] Reading βαλιὰν for γ' ἀλιᾶν with Scaliger, with Monk's addition of ἔλαφον, and his further correction ὀρείαν ἢ.

[4] From here to the end of the chorus is regarded by Paley as spurious.

[5] Omitting the words δύνασιν ἔχει as a probable gloss on σθένει (MSS. σθένειν); so Paley and Weil.

by men and thrust behind them, lawlessness o'er law prevailing, and mortals no[1] longer making common cause to keep the jealousy of gods from reaching them.]

CLY. (*reappearing from the tent.*) I have come from the tent to look out for my husband, who went away and left its shelter long ago; while that poor child, my daughter, hearing of the death her father designs for her, is in tears, uttering in many keys her piteous lamentation. (*Catching sight of* AGAMEMNON.) It seems I was speaking of one not far away; for there is Agamemnon, who will soon be detected in the commission of a crime against his own child.

AGA. Daughter of Leda, 'tis lucky I have found thee outside the tent, to discuss with thee in our daughter's absence subjects not suited for the ears of maidens on the eve of marriage.

CLY. What, pray, is dependent on the present crisis?

AGA. Send the maiden out to join her father, for the lustral water stands there ready, and barley-meal to scatter with the hand on the cleansing flame, and heifers to be slain in honour of the goddess Artemis, to usher in the marriage, their black blood spouting from them.

CLY. Though fair the words thou usest, I know not how I am to name thy deeds in terms of praise.

[Come[2] forth, my daughter; full well thou knowest what is in thy father's mind; take the child Orestes, thy brother, and bring him with thee in the folds of thy robe.

Behold! she comes, in obedience to thy summons. Myself will speak the rest alike for her and me.

AGA. My child, why weepest thou and no longer lookest cheerfully? why art thou fixing thine eyes upon the ground and holding thy robe before them?

[CLY.] Alas! with which of my woes shall I begin? for I

[1] Paley follows Hermann in inserting *μὴ* to complete the metre.

[2] Paley thinks ll. 1117-23 were interpolated by way of making the entrance of Iphigenia with Orestes (cf. l. 1241) appear less abrupt.

may treat them all as first, [or put them last or midway anywhere].[1]

AGA. How now? I find you all alike, confusion and alarm in every eye.

CLY. My husband, answer frankly the questions I ask thee.

AGA. There is no necessity to order me; I am willing to be questioned.

CLY. Dost thou mean to slay thy child and mine?

AGA. (*starting.*) Ha! these are heartless words, unwarranted suspicions!

CLY. Peace! answer me that question first.

AGA. Put a fair question and thou shalt have a fair answer.

CLY. I have no other questions to put; give me no other answers.

AGA. O fate revered, O destiny, and fortune mine!

CLY. Aye, and mine and this maid's too; the three share one bad fortune.

AGA. Whom have I injured?

CLY. Dost thou ask *me* this question? A thought like that itself amounts to thoughtlessness.

AGA. Ruined! my secret out!

CLY. [I know all; I have heard what thou art bent on doing to me.][2] Thy very silence and those frequent groans are a confession; tire not thyself by telling it.

AGA. Lo! I am silent; for, if I tell thee a falsehood, needs must I add effrontery to misfortune.

CLY. Well, listen; for I will now unfold my meaning and no longer employ dark riddles. In the first place,—to reproach thee first with this,—it was not of my own free will but by force that thou didst take and wed me, after slaying

[1] This line was rejected by Monk, whom most editors follow.

[2] Paley regards this line as spurious; the use of σύ, where no emphasis seems intended, is his main reason for rejecting it.

Tantalus, my former husband, and dashing[1] my babe on the ground alive, when thou hadst torn him from my breast with brutal violence. Then, when those two sons of Zeus, who were likewise my brothers, came flashing on horseback to war with thee, Tyndareus, my aged sire, rescued thee because of thy suppliant prayers, and thou in turn hadst me to wife. Once reconciled to thee upon this footing, thou wilt bear me witness I have been a blameless wife to thee and thy family, chaste in love, an honour to thy house, that so thy coming in might be with joy and thy going out with gladness. And 'tis seldom a man secures a wife like this, though the getting of a worthless woman is no rarity.

Besides three daughters, of one of whom thou art heartlessly depriving me, I am the mother of this son of thine. If anyone asks thee thy reason for slaying her, tell me, what wilt thou say? or must I say it for thee? "It is that Menelaus may recover Helen." An honourable exchange, indeed, to pay a wicked woman's price in children's lives! 'Tis buying what we most detest[2] with what we hold most dear. Again, if thou go forth with the host, leaving me in thy halls, and art long absent at Troy, what will my feelings be at home, dost think? when I behold each vacant chair and her chamber now deserted, and then sit down alone in tears, making ceaseless lamentation for her, "Ah! my child, he that begat thee hath slain thee himself, he and no one else, nor was it by another's hand." . . . . . [3] to thy home, after leaving

[1] Reading *προσούδισας πέδῳ* (Scaliger) and *ζῶν* (Musgrave) for the MSS. *σῷ προσούρισας πάλῳ*, which Hermann explains as meaning "having added him to your share in the division of the spoils." Hartung gives *προσώρισας*.

[2] Reading *τἄχθιστα τοῖσι*.

[3] Paley thinks a line has here fallen out to the effect, "How wilt thou dare to return to thy wife and . . ." Monks rejects l. 1179; omitting it, the sense might be continuous, thus; "Thy father was the real murderer and no one else; for it only needed a slight excuse on *thy*

such a price to be paid; for it needs [1] now but a trifling pretext for me and the daughters remaining to give thee the reception it is right thou shouldst receive. I adjure thee by the gods, compel me not to sin against thee, nor sin thyself. Go to; suppose thou sacrifice the child; what prayer wilt thou utter, when 'tis done? what will the blessing be that thou wilt invoke upon thyself as thou art slaying our daughter? an ill returning maybe, seeing the disgrace that speeds thy going forth. Is it right that I should pray for any luck to attend thee? Surely we should deem the gods devoid of sense, if we harboured a kindly feeling towards murderers. Shalt thou embrace thy children on thy coming back to Argos? Nay, thou hast no right. Will any child of thine e'er face thee, if thou have surrendered one of them to death?[2] Has this ever entered into thy calculations, or does thy one duty consist in carrying a sceptre about and marching at the head of an army? when thou mightest have made this fair proposal among the Argives; "Is it your wish, Achæans, to sail for Phrygia's shores? Why then, cast lots whose daughter has to die." For that would have been a fair course for thee to pursue, instead of picking out thy own child for the victim and presenting her to the Danai; or Menelaus, inasmuch as it was his concern, should have slain Hermione for her mother. As it is, I, who still am true to thee, must lose my child; while she, who went astray, will return with her daughter, and live in happiness at Sparta. If I am wrong in aught herein, answer me; but if my words have been fairly urged, do not still [3] slay thy child, who is mine too, and thou wilt be wise.

part, and the sacrifice might have been prevented . . ."; but this is extremely awkward, and Paley's view is preferable.

[1] Reading *ἐνδεῖ* with Reiske.

[2] Reading *ἐὰν σφῶν προείμενος*, as Nauck edits from the joint correction of Hartung and Elmsley.

[3] The reading adopted by Paley is *εἰ δ' εὖ λέλεκται τἀμά, μηκέτι* . . . for the admittedly corrupt reading of the MSS.

CHO. Hearken to her, Agamemnon, for to join in saving thy children's lives is surely a noble deed; none would gainsay this.

IPH.[1] Had I the eloquence of Orpheus, my father, to move the rocks by chanted spells to follow me, or to charm by speaking whom I would, I had resorted to it. But as it is, I'll bring my tears,—the only art I know; for that I might attempt. And about thy knees, in suppliant wise, I twine my limbs,—these limbs thy wife here bore. Destroy me not before my time, for sweet it is to look upon the light, and force me not to visit scenes below. I was the first to call thee father, thou the first to call me child; the first was I to sit upon thy knee and give and take the fond caress. And this was what thou then wouldst say, "Shall I see thee, my child, living a happy prosperous life in a husband's home one day, in a manner worthy of myself?" And I in my turn would ask, as I hung about thy beard, whereto I now am clinging, "How shall I see thee? Shall I be giving thee a glad reception in my halls, father, in thy old age, repaying all thy anxious care in rearing me?"

I remember all we said, 'tis thou who hast forgotten and now wouldst take my life. By Pelops, I entreat thee spare me, by thy father Atreus and my mother here, who suffers now a second time the pangs she felt before when bearing me! What have I to do with the marriage of Paris and Helen? why is his coming to prove my ruin, father? Look upon me; one glance, one kiss bestow, that this at least I may carry to my death as a memorial of thee, though thou heed not my pleading.[2]

(*Holding up the babe* ORESTES.) Feeble ally though thou art, brother, to thy loved ones, yet add thy tears to mine and entreat our father for thy sister's life; even in babes

[1] Paley thinks that Iphigenia now advances on to the stage with the child Orestes, and throws herself at Agamemnon's knees.

[2] Nauck incloses l. 1240 in brackets as suspicious.

there is a natural sense of ill. O father, see this speechless supplication made to thee; pity me; have mercy on my tender years! Yea, by thy beard we two fond hearts implore thy pity, the one a babe, a full-grown maid the other. By summing all my pleas in one, I will prevail in what I say. To gaze upon yon light is man's most cherished gift; that life below is nothingness, and whoso longs for death is mad. Better live a life of woe than die a death of glory!

CHO. Ah, wretched Helen! Awful the struggle that has come to the sons of Atreus and their children, thanks to thee and those marriages of thine.

AGA. While loving my own children, I yet understand what should move my pity and what should not; I were a madman else. 'Tis terrible for me to bring myself to this, nor less terrible is it to refuse, daughter; for I must fare the same.[1] Ye see the vastness of yon naval host, and the numbers of bronze-clad warriors from Hellas, who can neither make their way to Ilium's towers nor raze the far-famed citadel of Troy, unless I offer thee according to the word of Calchas the seer. [[2]Some mad desire possesses the host of Hellas to sail forthwith to the land of the barbarians, and put a stop to the rape of wives from Hellas, and they will slay my daughters in Argos as well as you and me, if I disregard the goddess's behests. It is not Menelaus who hath enslaved me to him, child, nor have I followed wish of his; nay, 'tis Hellas, for whom I must sacrifice thee whether I will or no; to this necessity I bow my head; for her freedom must be preserved, as far as any help of thine, daughter, or mine can go; nor must they, who are the sons of Hellas, be pillaged of their wives by barbarian robbery.]

[AGAMEMNON *rushes from the stage.*

[1] Paley follows Kirchhoff in reading *ταὐτὰ*. Others retain τοῦτο and render "I must do this deed."

[2] The following passage from l. 1264-75 is regarded by Dindorf as spurious. Hennig thinks l. 1269 and ll. 1271-75 are genuine.

CLY. My child! Ye stranger ladies!

Woe is me for this thy death! Thy father flies, surrendering thee to Hades.

IPH. Woe is me, O mother mine! for the same strain hath fallen to both of us in our fortune. No more for me the light of day! no more the beams of yonder sun! Woe for that snow-beat glen in Phrygia and the hills of Ida, where Priam once exposed a tender babe, torn from his mother's arms to meet a deadly doom, e'en Paris, called the child of Ida in the Phrygians' town. Would Priam ne'er had settled him, the herdsman reared amid the herds, beside that water crystal-clear, where are fountains of the Nymphs and their meadow rich with blooming flowers, where hyacinths and rose-buds blow for goddesses to gather! Hither one day came Pallas and Cypris of the subtle heart, Hera too and Hermes messenger of Zeus,—Cypris, proud of the longing she causes; Pallas of her prowess; and Hera of her royal marriage with king Zeus;—to decide a hateful strife about their beauty; but it is my death, maidens,—fraught, 'tis true, with glory to the Danai,—that Artemis has received as an offering, before they begin the voyage to Ilium.[1]

O mother, mother! he that begat me to this life of sorrow has gone and left me all alone. Ah! woe is me! a bitter, bitter sight for me was Helen, evil Helen! to me now doomed to bleed and die, slaughtered by an impious sire.

I would this Aulis had never received in its havens here the sterns of their bronze-beaked ships, the fleet which was speeding them to Troy; and would that Zeus had never breathed on the Euripus a wind to stop the expedition,[2]

[1] Reading *μὰν* for *μὲν* and *ἐμὸν* for *ἐμοὶ*, also *προθύ'μαν'* for *πρόθυμά σ'* in this hopelessly corrupt passage. Monk, rejecting *ὄνομα . . . Δαναίδαισιν*, assigns the next two lines to the Chorus, merely altering *κόραι* to *κόρα*, but this is scarcely likely to be the solution of the difficulty.

[2] Reading *πομπᾷ*. The whole of this passage (l. 1323-29) is pro-

tempering, as he doth, a different breeze to different men, so that some have joy in setting sail, and sorrow some, and others hard constraint, to make some start, and others stay and others furl their sails!

Full of trouble then, it seems, is the race of mortals, full of trouble verily; and 'tis ever Fate's decree that man should find distress.

Woe! woe to thee, thou child of Tyndareus, for the suffering and anguish sore, which thou art causing the Danai!

CHO. I pity thee for thy cruel fate,—a fate I would thou ne'er hadst met!

IPH. O mother that bare me! I see a throng of men approaching.

CLY. It is the goddess-born thou seest, child, for whom thou camest hither.

IPH. (*calling into the tent.*) Open the tent-door to me, servants, that I may hide myself.

CLY. Why seek to fly, my child?

IPH. I am ashamed to face Achilles.

CLY. Wherefore?

IPH. The luckless ending to our marriage causes me to feel abashed.

CLY. No time for affectation now in face of what has chanced. Stay then; reserve will do no good, if only we can[1]——

ACH. Daughter of Leda, lady of sorrows!

CLY. No misnomer that.

ACH. A fearful cry is heard among the Argives.

CLY. What is it? tell me.

bably more or less corrupt, and the construction suspiciously harsh; possibly the text has suffered from interpolations and glosses on the original.

[1] The sentence is left unfinished, owing to the sudden address of Achilles; possibly it would have run "if only we can enlist his aid."

ACH. It concerns thy child.

CLY. An evil omen for thy words.

ACH. They say her sacrifice is necessary.

CLY. And is there no one to say a word against them?

ACH. Indeed I was in some danger myself from the tumult.

CLY. In danger of what? kind sir.

ACH. Of being stoned.

CLY. Surely not for trying to save my daughter?

ACH. The very reason.

CLY. Who would have dared to lay a finger on thee?

ACH. The men of Hellas, one and all.

CLY. Were not thy Myrmidon warriors at thy side?

ACH. They were the first who turned against me.

CLY. My child! we are lost, undone, it seems.

ACH. They taunted me as the man whom marriage had enslaved.

CLY. And what didst thou answer them?

ACH. I craved the life of her I meant to wed,——

CLY. Justly so.

ACH. The wife her father promised me.

CLY. Aye, and sent to fetch from Argos.

ACH. But I was overcome by clamorous cries.

CLY. Truly the mob is a dire mischief.

ACH. But I will help thee for all that.

CLY. Wilt thou really fight them single-handed?

ACH. Dost see these warriors here, carrying my arms?

CLY. Bless thee for thy kind intent!

ACH. Well, I shall be blessed.

CLY. Then my child will not be slaughtered now?

ACH. No, not with my consent at any rate.

CLY. But will any of them come to lay hands on the maid?

ACH. Thousands of them, with Odysseus at their head.

CLY. The son of Sisyphus?

ACH. The very same.

CLY. Acting for himself or by the army's order?

ACH. By their choice—and his own.

CLY. An evil choice indeed, to stain his hands in blood!

ACH. But I will hold him back.

CLY. Will he seize and bear her hence against her will?

ACH. Aye, by her golden hair no doubt.

CLY. What must I do, when it comes to that?

ACH. Keep hold of thy daughter.

CLY. Be sure that she shall not be slain, as far as that can help her.

ACH. Believe me, it will come to this.[1]

IPH. Mother, hear me while I speak, for I see that thou art wroth with thy husband to no purpose; 'tis hard for us to persist in impossibilities. Our thanks are due to this stranger for his ready help; but thou must also see to it that he is not reproached by the army, leaving us no better off and himself involved in trouble. Listen, mother; hear what thoughts have passed across my mind. I am resolved to die; and this I fain would do with honour, dismissing from me what is mean. Towards this now, mother, turn thy thoughts, and with me weigh how well I speak; to me the whole of mighty Hellas looks; on me the passage o'er the sea depends; on me the sack of Troy; and in my power it lies to check henceforth barbarian raids on happy Hellas, if ever in the days to come they seek to seize her daughters, when once they have atoned by death[2] for the violation of Helen's marriage by Paris. All this deliverance will my death insure, and my fame for setting Hellas free will be a happy one. Besides, I have no right at all to cling too fondly to my life; for thou didst not bear me for myself alone, but as a public blessing to all Hellas.

[1] *i.e.*, to an actual appeal to force.

[2] Lines 1381-2 are corrupt. The corrections here followed are *τάσδ'* for *τὰς* in l. 1381, and *ὀλέθρῳ γάμον, ὅν* Hermann's emendation of *ὄλεθρον, ἣντιν'* in l. 1382.

What! shall countless warriors, armed with shields, those myriads sitting at the oar, find courage to attack the foe and die for Hellas, because their fatherland is wronged, and my one life prevent all this? What [1] kind of justice is that? could I find a word in answer? Now turn we to that other point. It is not right that this man should enter the lists with all Argos or be slain for a woman's sake. Better a single man should see the light than ten thousand women. If Artemis is minded to take this body, am I, a weak mortal, to thwart the goddess? Nay, that were impossible. To Hellas I resign it; offer this sacrifice and make an utter end of Troy. This is my enduring monument; marriage, motherhood, and fame,—all these is it to me. And it is but right, mother, that Hellenes should rule barbarians, but not barbarians Hellenes, those being slaves, while these are free.

CHO. Thou playest a noble part, maiden; but sickly are the whims of Fate and the goddess.

ACH. Daughter of Agamemnon! some god was bent on blessing me, could I but have won thee for my wife. In thee I reckon Hellas happy, and thee in Hellas; for this that thou hast said is good and worthy of thy fatherland; [since thou, abandoning a strife with heavenly powers, which are too strong for thee, has fairly weighed advantages and needs.] [2] But now that I have looked into thy noble nature, I feel still more a fond desire to win thee for my bride. Look to it; for I would fain serve thee and receive thee in my halls; and witness Thetis, how I grieve to think I shall not save thy life by doing battle with the Danai. Reflect, I say; a dreadful ill is death.

[1] Reading Hermann's correction of this corrupt line,

τί τὸ δίκαιον τοῦτό γ'; ἆρ' ἔχοιμ' ἂν ἀντειπεῖν ἔπος;

[2] These two lines 1409-10 are rejected by Monk; Dindorf thinks the entire passage from l. 1408-33 spurious, an opinion in which Paley does not concur.

IPH. This I say, without regard to anyone.[1] Enough that the daughter of Tyndareus is causing wars and bloodshed by her beauty; then be not slain thyself, sir stranger, nor seek to slay another on my account; but let me, if I can, save Hellas.

ACH. Heroic spirit! I can say no more to this, since thou art so minded; for thine is a noble resolve; why should not one avow the truth? Yet will I speak, for thou wilt haply change thy mind; that thou mayst know then what my offer is, I will go and place these arms of mine near the altar, resolved not to permit thy death but to prevent it; for brave as thou art, at sight of the knife held at thy throat, thou wilt soon avail thyself of what I said. [So I will not let thee perish through any thoughtlessness of thine, but will go to the temple of the goddess with these arms and await thy arrival there.][2] [*Exit* ACHILLES.

IPH. Mother, why so silent, thine eyes wet with tears?

CLY. I have reason, woe is me! to be sad at heart.

IPH. Forbear; make me not a coward; here in one thing obey me.

CLY. Say what it is, my child, for at my hands thou shalt ne'er suffer injury.

IPH. Cut not off the tresses of thy hair for me, [nor clothe thyself in sable garb.[3]]

CLY. Why, my child, what is it thou hast said? Shall I, when I lose thee,——[4]

IPH. "Lose" me, thou dost not; I am saved and thou renowned, as far as I can make thee.

CLY. How so? Must I not mourn thy death?

[1] The words *οὐδὲν οἰκεῖν' εὐλαβουμένη* have small MSS. authority, and were probably inserted by a grammarian to complete the verse.

[2] Lines 1431-3 are rejected by Monk. Nauck, on Dindorf's authority, also incloses l. 1426 and ll. 1429-33 in brackets.

[3] This line was rejected by Hermann, Burges, and most other editors.

[4] The aposiopesis may be supplied by "forbear to mourn."

IPH. By no means, for I shall have no tomb heaped o'er me.

CLY. What, is not the act of dying held to imply burial?

IPH. The altar of the goddess, Zeus's daughter, will be my tomb.

CLY. Well, my child, I will let thee persuade me, for thou sayest well.

IPH. Aye, as one who prospereth and doeth Hellas service.

CLY. What message shall I carry to thy sisters?

IPH. Put not mourning raiment on them either.

CLY. But is there no fond message I can give the maidens from thee?

IPH. Yes, my farewell words; and promise me to rear this babe Orestes to manhood.

CLY. Press him to thy bosom; 'tis thy last look.

IPH. O thou that art most dear to me! thou hast helped thy friends as thou hadst means.

CLY. Is there anything I can do to pleasure thee in Argos?

IPH. Yes, hate not my father, thy own husband.

CLY. Fearful are the trials through which he has to go because of thee.

IPH. It was against his will he ruined me for the sake of Hellas.

CLY. Ah! but he employed base treachery, unworthy of Atreus.

IPH. Who will escort me hence, before my hair is torn?

CLY. I will go with thee.

IPH. No, not thou; thou say'st not well.

CLY. I will, clinging to thy robes.

IPH. Be persuaded by me, mother, stay here; for this is the better way alike for me and thee; but let one of these attendants of my father conduct me to the meadow of Artemis, where I shall be sacrificed.

CLY. Art gone from me, my child?

IPH. Aye, and with no chance of ever returning.

CLY. Leaving thy mother?

IPH. Yes, as thou seest, undeservedly.

CLY. Hold! leave me not!

IPH. I cannot let thee shed a tear. (*To the* CHORUS.) Be it yours, maidens, to hymn in joyous strains Artemis, the child of Zeus, for my hard lot; and let the order for a solemn hush go forth to the Danai. Begin the sacrifice with the baskets, let the fire blaze for the purifying meal of sprinkling, and my father pace from left to right about the altar; for I come to bestow on Hellas safety crowned with victory. Lead me hence, me the destroyer of Ilium's town and the Phrygians; give me wreaths to cast about me; bring them hither; here are my tresses to crown; bring lustral water too. Dance to Artemis, queen Artemis the blest, around her fane and altar; for by the blood of my sacrifice I will blot out the oracle, if it needs must be.

O mother, lady revered! for thee shall my tears be shed, and now; for at the holy rites I may not weep.[1]

Sing with me, maidens, sing the praises of Artemis, whose temple faces Chalcis, where angry spearmen madly chafe, here in the narrow havens of Aulis, because of me.

O Pelasgia, land of my birth, and Mycenæ, my home!

CHO. Is it on Perseus' citadel thou callest, that town Cyclopean workmen builded?

IPH. To be a light to Hellas didst thou rear me, and so I say not No to death.

CHO. Thou art right; no fear that fame will e'er desert thee!

IPH. Hail to thee, bright lamp of day and light of Zeus! A different life, a different lot is henceforth mine. Farewell I bid thee, light beloved! [*Exit* IPHIGENIA.

[1] Lines 1488-90 are assigned by some editors to the Chorus, but there seems little reason for the arrangement.

[CHO.[1] Behold the maiden on her way, the destroyer of Ilium's town and its Phrygians, with garlands twined about her head, and drops of lustral water on her, soon to besprinkle with her gushing blood the altar of a murderous goddess, what time her shapely neck is severed.[2]

For thee fair streams of a father's pouring and lustral waters are in store, for thee Achæa's host is waiting, eager to reach the citadel of Ilium. But let us celebrate Artemis, the daughter of Zeus, queen among the gods, as if upon some happy chance.

O lady revered, delighting in human sacrifice, send on its way to Phrygia's land the host of the Hellenes, to Troy's abodes of guile, and grant that Agamemnon may wreathe his head with deathless fame, a crown of fairest glory for the spearmen of Hellas.[3]

MES. Come forth, O Clytemnestra, daughter of Tyndareus, from the tent, to hear my news.

CLY. I heard thy voice and am come in sad dismay and fearful dread, not sure but what thou hast arrived with tidings of some fresh trouble for me besides the present woe.

MES. Nay, rather would I unfold to thee a story strange and marvellous about thy child.

CLY. Delay not, then, but speak at once.

MES. Dear mistress, thou shalt learn all clearly; from the outset will I tell it, unless my memory fail me somewhat and confuse my tongue in its account. As soon as we reached the grove of Artemis, the child of Zeus, and the meadows gay with flowers, where the Achæan troops were gathered,

[1] Paley agrees with Porson in regarding the rest of the play after Iphigenia's exit as the work of an interpolator; he follows as his text Kirchhoff's collation of the MSS., only noticing a few corrections; for the purposes of translation some further variations are here admitted.

[2] Lines 1514-16 read *διαίμονος* with Markland for *γε δαίμονος*; *ῥανοῦσαν*, Markland for *θανοῦσαν*; and omit *τε* with Bothe after *εὐφυᾶ*.

[3] Reading *Ἑλλάσι* with Markland for *Ἑλλάδι*.

bringing thy daughter with us, forthwith the Argive host began assembling; but when king Agamemnon saw the maiden on her way to the grove to be sacrificed, he gave one groan, and, turning away his face, let the tears burst from his eyes, as he held his robe before them. But the maid, standing close by him that begot her, spake on this wise, "O my father, here am I to do thy bidding; freely I offer this body of mine for my country and all Hellas, that ye may lead me to the altar of the goddess and sacrifice me, since this is Heaven's ordinance. Good luck be yours for any help that I afford! and may ye obtain the victor's gift and come again to the land of your fathers. So then let none of the Argives lay hands on me, for I will bravely yield my neck without a word."

She spake; and each man marvelled, as he heard the maiden's brave, unflinching speech. But in the midst up stood Talthybius,—for his this duty was,—and bade the host refrain from word or deed; and Calchas, the seer, drawing a sharp sword from out its scabbard laid it in a basket of beaten gold, crowning the maiden's head the while. Then the son of Peleus, taking the basket and with it lustral water in his hand, ran round the altar of the goddess uttering these words, "O Artemis, thou child of Zeus, slayer of wild beasts, that wheelest thy dazzling light amid the gloom, accept this sacrifice, which we, the host of the Achæans and king Agamemnon with us, offer to thee, even pure blood from a beauteous maiden's neck; and grant us safe sailing for our ships and the sack of Troy's towers by our spears."

Meantime the sons of Atreus and all the host stood looking on the ground, while the priest, seizing his knife, offered up a prayer and was closely scanning the maiden's throat to see where he should strike. 'Twas no slight sorrow filled my heart, as I stood by with bowed head; when lo! a *sudden* miracle! Each one of us distinctly heard the sound

of a blow,[1] but none saw the spot where the maiden vanished. Loudly the priest cried out, and all the host took up the cry at the sight of a marvel all unlooked for, due to some god's agency, and passing all belief, although 'twas seen; for there upon the ground lay a hind of size immense and passing fair to see, gasping out her life, with whose blood the altar of the goddess was thoroughly bedewed. Whereon spake Calchas thus;—his joy thou canst imagine;—"Ye captains of this leagued Achæan host, do ye see this victim, which the goddess has set before her altar, a mountain-roaming hind? This is more welcome to her by far than the maid, that she may not defile her altar by shedding noble blood. Gladly has she accepted it and is granting us a prosperous voyage for[2] our attack on Ilium. Wherefore take heart, sailors, each man of you, and away to your ships, for to-day must we leave the hollow bays of Aulis and cross the Ægean main."

Then, when the sacrifice was wholly burnt to ashes in the blazing flame, he offered such prayers as were meet, that the army might win return; but me Agamemnon sends to tell thee this, and say what Heaven-sent luck is his, and how he hath secured undying fame throughout the length of Hellas. Now I was there myself and speak as an eye-witness; without a doubt thy child flew away to the gods. A truce then to thy sorrowing, and cease to be wroth with thy husband; for God's ways with man are not what we expect, and those whom he loves, he keepeth safe; yea, for this day hath seen thy daughter dead and brought to life again.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHO. What joy to hear these tidings from the messenger! He tells thee thy child is living still, among the gods.

CLY. Which of the gods, my child, hath stolen thee?

[1] Reading πληγῆς σαφῶς γὰρ πᾶς τις ᾔσθετο κτύπον (Weil).
[2] Reading Ἰλίου πρὸς for Ἰλίου τ' with Hermann.

How am I to address thee? How can I be sure[1] that this is not an idle tale told to cheer me, to make me cease my piteous lamentation for thee?

CHO. Lo! king Agamemnon approaches, to confirm this story for thee.

AGA. Happy may we be counted,[2] lady, as far as concerns our daughter; for she hath fellowship with gods in very sooth. But thou must take this tender[3] babe and start for home, for the host is looking now to sail. Fare thee well! 'tis long ere I shall greet thee on my return from Troy; may it be well with thee!

CHO. Son of Atreus, start for Phrygia's land with joy and so return, I pray, after taking from Troy her fairest spoils.]

[1] By omitting the stop after φῶ, as Nauck edits, and making the sentence continuous, perhaps the simplest explanation of this passage is obtained.

[2] To correct the scansion Hermann proposes ὀλβιζοίμεθ' ἄν.

[3] νεαγενῆ, for which Porson gives εὐγενῆ to correct the metre.

THE CYCLOPS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SILENUS.
CHORUS OF SATYRS.
ODYSSEUS.
THE CYCLOPS.

SCENE.—Mount Ætna in Sicily, before the cave of the Cyclops.

THE CYCLOPS.

SIL. O Bromius, unnumbered are the toils I bear because of thee, no less now than when I was young and hale; first, when thou wert driven mad by Hera and didst leave the mountain nymphs, thy nurses; next, when in battle with earth-born spearmen I stood beside thee on the right as squire, and slew Enceladus, smiting him full in the middle of his targe with my spear. Come, though, let me see; must I confess 'twas all a dream? No, by Zeus! since I really showed his spoils to the Bacchic god. And now am I enduring to the full a toil still worse than those. For when Hera sent forth a race of Tyrrhene pirates against thee, that thou mightest be smuggled far away, I, as soon as the news reached me, sailed in quest of thee with my children; and, taking the helm myself, I stood on the end of the stern and steered our trim craft; and my sons, sitting at the oars, made the grey billows froth and foam as they sought thee, my liege. But just as we had come nigh Malea in our course, an east-wind blew upon the ship and drove us hither to the rock of Ætna, where in lonely caverns dwell the one-eyed children of ocean's god, the murdering Cyclopes. Captured by one of them we are slaves in his house; Polyphemus they call him whom we serve; and instead of Bacchic revelry we are herding a godless Cyclops's flocks; and so it is my children, striplings as they are, tend the young thereof on the edge of the downs; while my appointed task is to stay here and fill the troughs and sweep out the cave, or wait

upon the ungodly Cyclops at his impious feasts. His orders now compel obedience; I have to scrape out his house with the rake you see, so as to receive the Cyclops, my absent master, and his sheep in clean caverns.

But already I see my children driving their browsing flocks towards me.

What means this? is the beat of feet in the Sicinnis dance the same to you now as when ye attended the Bacchic god in his revelries and made your way with dainty steps to the music of lyres to the halls of Althæa?

Cho. Offspring of well-bred sires and dams, pray whither wilt thou be gone from me to the rocks? Hast thou not here a gentle breeze, and grass to browse, and water from the eddying stream set near the cave in troughs? and are not thy young ones bleating for thee?

Pst! pst! wilt thou not browse here, here on the dewy slope? Ho! ho! ere long will I cast a stone at thee. Away, away! O horned one, to the fold-keeper of the Cyclops, the country-ranging shepherd. Loosen thy bursting udder; welcome to thy teats the kids, whom thou leavest in the lambkins' pens. Those little bleating kids, asleep the livelong day, miss thee; wilt then leave at last the rich grass pastures on the peaks of Ætna and enter the fold? . . . .

Here we have no Bromian god; no dances here, or Bacchantes thyrsus-bearing; no roll of drums, or drops of sparkling wine by gurgling founts; nor is it now with Nymphs in Nysa I sing a song of Bacchus, Bacchus! to the queen of love, in quest of whom I once sped on with Bacchantes, white of foot.

Dear friend, dear Bacchic god, whither art roaming alone, waving thy auburn locks, while I, thy minister, do service to the one-eyed Cyclops, a slave and wanderer I, clad in this wretched goat-skin dress, severed from thy love?

Sil. Hush, children! and bid our servants fold the flocks *in the* rock-roofed cavern.

CHO. (*To* SERVANTS.) Away! (*To* SILENUS.) But prithee, why such haste, father?

SIL. I see the hull of a ship from Hellas at the shore, and men, that wield the oar, on their way to this cave with some chieftain. About their necks they carry empty vessels and pitchers for water; they are in want of food. Luckless strangers! who can they be? They know not what manner of man our master Polyphemus is, to have set foot here in his cheerless abode and come to the jaws of the cannibal Cyclops in an evil hour. But hold ye your peace, that we may inquire whence they come to the peak of Sicilian Ætna.

ODY. Pray tell us, sirs, of some river-spring whence we might draw a draught to slake our thirst, or of someone willing to sell victuals to mariners in need.

Why, what is this? We seem to have chanced upon a city of the Bromian god; here by the caves I see a group of Satyrs. To the eldest first I bid "All hail!"

SIL. All hail, sir! tell me who thou art, and name thy country.

ODY. Odysseus of Ithaca, king of the Cephallenians' land.

SIL. I know him for a prating knave, one of Sisyphus' shrewd offspring.

ODY. I am the man; abuse me not.

SIL. Whence hast thou sailed hither to Sicily?

ODY. From Ilium and the toils of Troy.

SIL. How was that? didst thou not know the passage to thy native land?

ODY. Tempestuous winds drove me hither against my will.

SIL. God wot! thou art in the same plight as I am.

ODY. Why, wert thou too drifted hither against thy will?

SIL. I was, as I pursued the pirates who carried Bromius off.

ODY. What land is this and who are its inhabitants?

SIL. This is mount Ætna, the highest point in Sicily.

ODY. But where are the city-walls and ramparts?

SIL. There are none; the headlands, sir, are void of men.

ODY. Who then possess the land? the race of wild creatures?

SIL. The Cyclopes, who have caves, not roofed houses.

ODY. Obedient unto whom? or is the power in the people's hands?

SIL. They are rovers; no man obeys another in anything.

ODY. Do they sow Demeter's grain, or on what do they live?

SIL. On milk and cheese and flesh of sheep.

ODY. Have they the drink of Bromius, the juice of the vine?

SIL. No indeed! and thus it is a joyless land they dwell in.

ODY. Are they hospitable and reverent towards strangers?

SIL. Strangers, they say, supply the daintiest meat.

ODY. What, do they delight in killing men and eating them?

SIL. No one has ever arrived here without being butchered.

ODY. Where is the Cyclops himself? inside his dwelling?

SIL. He is gone hunting wild beasts with hounds on Ætna.

ODY. Dost know then what to do, that we may be gone from the land?

SIL. Not I, Odysseus; but I would do anything for thee.

ODY. Sell us food, of which we are in need.

SIL. There is nothing but flesh, as I said.

ODY. Well, even that is a pleasant preventive of hunger.

SIL. And there is cheese curdled with fig-juice, and the milk of kine.

ODY. Bring them out; a man should see his purchases.

SIL. But tell me, how much gold wilt thou give me in exchange?

ODY. No gold bring I, but Dionysus' drink.

SIL. Most welcome words! I have long been wanting that.

ODY. Yes, it was Maron, the god's son, who gave me a draught.

SIL. What! Maron whom once I dandled in these arms?

ODY. The son of the Bacchic god, that thou mayst learn more certainly.

SIL. Is it inside the ship, or hast thou it with thee?

ODY. This, as thou seest, is the skin that holds it, old sir.

SIL. Why, that would not give me so much as a mouthful.

ODY. This, and twice as much again as will run from the skin.

SIL. Fair the rill thou speakest of, delicious to me.

ODY. Shall I let thee taste the wine unmixed, to start with?

SIL. A reasonable offer; for of a truth a taste invites the purchase.

ODY. Well, I haul about a cup as well as the skin.

SIL. Come, let it gurgle in, that I may revive my memory by a pull at it.

ODY. There then!

SIL. Ye gods! what a delicious scent it has!

ODY. What! didst thou see it?

SIL. No, i' faith, but I smell it.

ODY. Taste it then, that thy approval may not stop at words.

SIL. Zounds! Bacchus is inviting me to dance; ha! ha!

ODY. Did it not gurgle finely down thy throttle?

SIL. Aye that it did, to the ends of my fingers.

ODY. Well, we will give thee money besides.

SIL. Only undo the skin, and never mind the money.

ODY. Bring out the cheeses then and lambs.

SIL. I will do so, with small thought of any master. For let me have a single cup of that and I would turn madman, giving in exchange for it the flocks of every Cyclops and then throwing myself into the sea from the Leucadian

rock, once I have been well drunk and smoothed out my wrinkled brow. For if a man rejoice not in his drinking, he is mad; for in drinking there is love with all its frolic, and dancing withal, and oblivion of woe. Shall not I then purchase so rare a drink, bidding the senseless Cyclops and his central eye go hang? [*Exit* SILENUS.

CHO. Hearken, Odysseus, let us hold some converse with thee.

ODY. Well, do so; ours is a meeting of friends.

CHO. Did you take Troy and capture the famous Helen?

ODY. Aye, and we destroyed the whole family of Priam.

CHO. After capturing your blooming prize, were all of you in turn her lovers? for she likes variety in husbands; the traitress! the sight of a man with embroidered breeches on his legs and a golden chain about his neck so fluttered her, that she left Menelaus, her excellent little husband. Would there had never been a race of women born into the world at all, unless it were for me alone!

SIL. (*reappearing with food.*) Lo! I bring you fat food from the flocks, king Odysseus, the young of bleating sheep and cheeses of curdled milk without stint. Carry them away with you and be gone from the cave at once, after giving me a drink of merry grape-juice in exchange.

CHO. Alack! yonder comes the Cyclops; what shall we do?

ODY. Then truly are we lost, old sir! whither must we fly?

SIL. Inside this rock, for there ye may conceal yourselves.

ODY. Dangerous advice of thine, to run into the net!

SIL. No danger; there are ways of escape in plenty in the rock.

ODY. No, never that; for surely Troy will groan and loudly too, if we flee from a single man, when I have oft withstood with my shield a countless host of Phrygians. Nay, if die we must, we will die a noble death; or, if we live, we will maintain our old renown at least with credit.

CYC. A light here! hold it up! what is this? what means this idleness, your Bacchic revelry? Here have we no Dionysus, nor clash of brass, nor roll of drums. Pray, how is it with my newly-born lambs in the caves? are they at the teat, running close to the side of their dams? Is the full amount of milk for cheeses milked out in baskets of rushes? How now? what say you? One of ye will soon be shedding tears from the weight of my club; look up, not down.

CHO. There! my head is bent back till I see Zeus himself; I behold both the stars and Orion.

CYC. Is my breakfast quite ready?

CHO. 'Tis laid; be thy throat only ready.

CYC. Are the bowls too full of milk?

CHO. Aye, so that thou canst swill off a whole hogshead, so it please thee.

CYC. Sheeps' milk or cows' milk or a mixture of both?

CHO. Whichever thou wilt; don't swallow me, that's all.

CYC. Not I; for you would start kicking in the pit of my stomach and kill me by your antics. (*Catching sight of* ODYSSEUS *and his followers.*) Ha! what is this crowd I see near the folds? Some pirates or robbers have put in here. Yes, I really see the lambs from my caves tied up there with twisted osiers, cheese-presses scattered about, and old Silenus with his bald pate all swollen with blows.

SIL. Oh! oh! poor wretch that I am, pounded to a fever.

CYC. By whom? who has been pounding thy head, old sirrah?

SIL. These are the culprits, Cyclops, all because I refused to let them plunder thee.

CYC. Did they not know I was a god and sprung from gods?

SIL. That was what I told them, but they persisted in plundering thy goods, and, in spite of my efforts, they

actually began to eat the cheese and carry off the lambs; and they said they would tie thee in a three-cubit pillory and tear out thy bowels by force at thy navel, and flay thy back thoroughly with the scourge; and then, after binding thee, fling thy carcase down among the benches of their ship to sell to some one for heaving up stones, or else throw thee into a mill.

CYC. Oh, indeed! Be off then and sharpen my cleavers at once; heap high the faggots and light them; for they shall be slain forthwith and fill this maw of mine, what time I pick my feast hot from the coals, waiting not for carvers, and fish up the rest from the cauldron boiled and sodden; for I have had my fill of mountain-fare and sated myself with banquets of lions and stags, but 'tis long I have been without human flesh.

SIL. Truly, master, a change like this is all the sweeter after everyday fare; for just of late there have been no fresh arrivals of strangers at these caves.

ODY. Hear the strangers too in turn, Cyclops. We had come near the cave from our ship, wishing to procure provisions by purchase, when this fellow sold us the lambs and handed them over for a stoup of wine to drink himself,—a voluntary act on both sides,—there was no violence employed at all. No, there is not a particle of truth in the story he tells, now that he has been caught selling thy property behind thy back.

SIL. I? Perdition catch thee!

ODY. If I am lying, yes.

SIL. O Cyclops, by thy sire Poseidon, by mighty Triton and Nereus, by Calypso and the daughters of Nereus, by the sacred billows and all the race of fishes! I swear to thee, most noble sir, dear little Cyclops, master mine, it is not I who sell thy goods to strangers, else may these children, dearly as I love them, come to an evil end.

CHO. Keep that for thyself; with my own eyes I saw thee

sell the goods to the strangers; and if I lie, perdition catch my sire! but injure not the strangers.

Cyc. Ye lie; for my part I put more faith in him than Rhadamanthus, declaring him more just. But I have some questions to ask. Whence sailed ye, strangers? of what country are you? what city was it nursed your childhood?

Ody. We are Ithacans by birth, and have been driven from our course by the winds of the sea on our way from Ilium, after sacking its citadel.

Cyc. Are ye the men who visited on Ilium, that bordereth on Scamander's wave, the rape of Helen, worst of women?

Ody. We are; that was the fearful labour we endured.

Cyc. A sorry expedition yours, to have sailed to the land of Phrygia for the sake of one woman!

Ody. It was a god's doing; blame not any son of man. But thee do we implore, most noble son of Ocean's god, speaking as free-born men; be not so cruel as to slay thy friends on their coming to thy cave, nor regard us as food for thy jaws, an impious meal; for we preserved thy sire, O king, in possession of his temple-seats deep in the nooks of Hellas; and the sacred port of Tænarus and Malea's furthest coves remain unharmed; and Sunium's rock, the silver-veined, sacred to Zeus-born Athena, still is safe, and Geræstus, the harbour of refuge; and we did not permit Phrygians to put such an intolerable reproach on Hellas.[1] Now in these things thou too hast a share, for thou dwellest in a corner of the land of Hellas beneath Ætna's fire-streaming rock; and although thou turn from arguments, still it is a custom amongst mortal men to receive shipwrecked sailors as their suppliants and show them hospitality and help them

[1] It is difficult to make anything of the Greek as it stands; and Hermann is probably right in his suspicion that something has been lost after l. 265. In the absence of any emendation that commends itself an attempt has been made to follow the received text.

with raiment; not that these should fill thy jaws and belly, their limbs transfixed with spits for piercing ox-flesh. The land of Priam hath emptied Hellas quite enough, drinking the blood of many whom the spear laid low, with the ruin it has brought on widowed wives, on aged childless dames, and hoary-headed sires; and if thou roast and consume the remnant,—a meal thou wilt rue,—why, where shall one turn? Nay, be persuaded by me, Cyclops; forego thy ravenous greed and choose piety rather than wickedness; for on many a man ere now unrighteous gains have brought down retribution.

SIL. . . . . I will give thee a word of advice! as for his flesh, leave not a morsel of it, and if thou eat his tongue, Cyclops, thou wilt become a monstrous clever talker.

CYC. Wealth, manikin, is the god for the wise; all else is mere vaunting and fine words. Plague take the headlands by the sea, on which my father seats himself! Why hast thou put forward these arguments? I shudder not at Zeus's thunder, nor know I wherein Zeus is a mightier god than I, sir stranger; what is more, I reck not of him; my reasons hear. When he pours down the rain from above, here in this rock in quarters snug, feasting on roast calf's flesh or some wild game and moistening well my upturned paunch with deep draughts from a tub of milk, I rival the thunder-claps of Zeus with my artillery; and when the north-wind blows from Thrace and sheddeth snow, I wrap my carcase in the hides of beasts and light a fire, and what care I for snow? The earth perforce, whether she like it or not, produces grass and fattens my flocks, which I sacrifice to no one save myself and this belly, the greatest of deities; but to the gods, not I! For surely to eat and drink one's fill from day to day and give oneself no grief at all, this is the king of gods for your wise man, but lawgivers go hang, chequering, as they do, the life of man! And so I will not cease from

indulging myself by devouring thee; and thou shalt receive this stranger's gift, that I may be free of blame,—fire and my father's element yonder, and a cauldron to hold thy flesh and boil it nicely in collops. So in with you, that ye may feast me well, standing round the altar to honour the cavern's god. [*Enters his cave.*

ODY. Alas! escaped from the troubles of Troy and the sea, my barque now strands upon the whim and forbidding heart of this savage.

O Pallas, mistress mine, goddess-daughter of Zeus, help me, help me now; for I am come to toils and depths of peril worse than all at Ilium; and thou, O Zeus, the stranger's god, who hast thy dwelling 'mid the radiant stars, behold these things; for, if thou regard them not, in vain art thou esteemed the great god Zeus, though but a thing of naught. [*Follows the* CYCLOPS *reluctantly.*

CHO. Ope wide the portal of thy gaping throat, Cyclops; for strangers' limbs, both boiled and grilled, are ready from off the coals for thee to gnaw and tear and mince up small, reclining in thy shaggy goatskin coat.

Relinquish not thy meal for me; keep that boat for thyself alone.[1] Avaunt this cave! avaunt the burnt-offerings, which the godless Cyclops offers on Ætna's altars, exulting in meals on strangers' flesh!

Oh! the ruthless monster! to sacrifice his guests at his own hearth, the suppliants of his halls, cleaving and tearing and serving up to his loathsome teeth a feast of human flesh, hot from the coals.

ODY. (*reappearing with a look of horror.*) O Zeus! what can I say after the hideous sights I have seen inside the cave, things past belief, resembling more the tales men tell than aught they do?

[1] According to Hermann, whose explanation is here followed, ll. 362-3 are spoken ironically, "pray do not consider my feelings; go on with your feast, as long as I am not asked to join it."

CHO. What news, Odysseus? has the Cyclops, most godless monster, been feasting on thy dear comrades?

ODY. Aye, he singled out a pair, on whom the flesh was fattest and in best condition, and took them up in his hand to weigh.

CHO. How went it with you then, poor wretch?

ODY. When we had entered yonder rocky abode, he lighted first a fire, throwing logs of towering oak upon his spacious hearth, enough for three waggons to carry as their load; next, close by the blazing flame, he placed his couch of pine-boughs laid upon the floor, and filled a bowl of some ten firkins, pouring white milk thereinto, after he had milked his kine; and by his side he put a can of ivy-wood, whose breadth was three cubits and its depth four maybe; [next he set his brazen pot a-boiling on the fire,[1]] spits too he set beside him, fashioned of the branches of thorn, their points hardened in the fire and the rest of them trimmed with the hatchet, and the blood-bowls of Ætna for the axe's edge.[2] Now when that hell-cook, god-detested, had everything quite ready, he caught up a pair of my companions and proceeded deliberately to cut the throat of one of them over the yawning brazen pot; but the other he clutched by the tendon of his heel, and, striking him against a sharp point of rocky stone, dashed out his brains; then, after hacking the fleshy parts with glutton cleaver, he set to grilling them, but the limbs he threw into his cauldron to seethe. And I, poor wretch, drew near with streaming eyes and waited on the Cyclops; but the others kept cowering like frightened birds in crannies of the rock, and the blood

[1] This line is clearly out of place as it stands; it has been proposed to place it either after line 385 or 395, after either of which it would be appropriate.

[2] *i.e.*, to catch the blood as the axe strikes, but the expression is a curious one. Kirchhoff gives γνάθους, in apposition to σφαγεῖα, taking *this* apparently to mean "slaughtering tools."

forsook their skin. Anon, when he had gorged himself upon my comrades' flesh and had fallen on his back, breathing heavily, there came a sudden inspiration to me. I filled a cup of this Maronian wine and offered him a draught, saying, "Cyclops, son of Ocean's god, see here what heavenly drink the grapes of Hellas yield, glad gift of Dionysus." He, glutted with his shameless meal, took and drained it at one draught, and, lifting up his hand, he thanked me thus, "Dearest to me of all my guests! fair the drink thou givest me to crown so fair a feast." Now when I saw his delight, I gave him another cup, knowing the wine would make him rue it, and he would soon be paying the penalty. Then he set to singing; but I kept filling bumper after bumper and heating him with drink. So there he is singing discordantly amid the weeping of my fellow-sailors, and the cave re-echoes; but I have made my way out quietly and would fain save thee and myself, if thou wilt. Tell me then, is it your wish, or is it not, to fly from this unsocial wretch and take up your abode with Naiad nymphs in the halls of the Bacchic god? Thy father within approves this scheme; but there! he is powerless, getting all he can out of his liquor; his wings are snared by the cup as if he had flown against bird-lime, and he is fuddled; but thou art young and lusty; so save thyself with my help and regain thy old friend Dionysus, so little like the Cyclops.

CHO. Best of friends, would we might see that day, escaping the godless Cyclops! [for 'tis long we have been without the joys of men, unable to escape him.][1]

ODY. Hear then how I will requite this vile monster and rescue you from thraldom.

CHO. Tell me how; no note of Asiatic lyre would sound

[1] Perhaps οὐκ ἔχοντε καταφυγεῖν might be read, to give some meaning to these worthless lines; but, as Paley points out, there are so many reasons for deciding them to be spurious that it is scarcely worth examining them very closely.

more sweetly in our ears than news of the Cyclops' death.

ODY. Delighted with this liquor of the Bacchic god, he fain would go a-revelling with his brethren.

CHO. I understand; thy purpose is to seize and slay him in the thickets when alone, or push him down a precipice.

ODY. Not at all; my plan is fraught with subtlety.

CHO. What then? Truly we have long heard of thy cleverness.

ODY. I mean to keep him from this revel, saying he must not give this drink to his brethren but keep it for himself alone and lead a happy life. Then when he falls asleep, o'ermastered by the Bacchic god, I will put a point with this sword of mine to an olive-branch I saw lying in the cave, and will set it on fire; and when I see it well alight, I will lift the heated brand, and, thrusting it full in the Cyclops' eye, melt out his sight with its blaze; and, as when a man in fitting the timbers of a ship makes his auger spin to and fro with a double strap, so will I make the brand revolve in the eye that gives the Cyclops light and will scorch up the pupil thereof.

CHO. Ho! ho! how glad I feel! wild with joy at the contrivance!

ODY. That done, I will embark thee and those thou lovest with old Silenus in the deep hold of my black ship, my ship with double banks of oars, and carry you away from this land.

CHO. Well, can I too lay hold of the blinding brand, as though the god's libation had been poured? for I would fain have a share in this offering of blood.

ODY. Indeed thou *must*, for the brand is large, and thou must help hold it.

CHO. How lightly would I lift the load of e'en a hundred wains, if that will help us to grub out the eye of the doomed Cyclops, like a wasp's nest.

ODY. Hush! for now thou knowest my plot in full, and when I bid you, obey the author of it; for I am not the man to desert my friends inside the cave and save myself alone. And yet I might escape; I am clear of the cavern's depths already; but no! to desert the friends with whom I journeyed hither and only save myself is not a righteous course.

[*Re-enters the cave.*

1ST HALF-CHO. Come, who will be the first and who the next to him upon the list to grip the handle of the brand, and, thrusting it into the Cyclops' eye, gouge out the light thereof?

2ND HALF-CHO. Hush! hush! Behold the drunkard leaves his rocky home, trolling loud some hideous lay, a clumsy tuneless clown, whom tears await. Come, let us give this boor a lesson in revelry. Ere long will he be blind at any rate.

1ST HALF-CHO. Happy he who plays the Bacchanal amid the precious streams distilled from grapes, stretched at full length for a revel, his arm around the friend he loves, and some fair dainty damsel on his couch, his hair perfumed with nard and glossy, the while he calls, "Oh! who will ope the door for me?"

CYC. Ha! ha! full of wine and merry with the feast's good cheer[1] am I, my hold freighted like a merchant-ship up to my belly's very top. This turf graciously invites me to seek my brother Cyclopes for a revel in the spring-tide.

Come, stranger, bring the wine-skin hither and hand it over to me.

2ND HALF-CHO. Forth from the house its fair lord comes, casting his fair glance round him. We have some one to befriend us.[2] A hostile brand is awaiting thee, no tender

[1] Herwerden's ἥδει seems preferable to ἤβᾳ which is probably corrupt.

[2] Hermann supplies the lacuna before φιλεῖ with φίλος ὢν, but there is so much corruption in this and the following few lines that little reliance can be placed on any emendation, nor is the sense very clear.

bride in dewy grot. No single colour will those garlands have, that soon shall cling so close about thy brow.

ODY. (*Returning with the wine-skin.*) Hearken, Cyclops; for I am well versed in the ways of Bacchus, whom I have given thee to drink.

CYC. And who is Bacchus? some reputed god?

ODY. The greatest god men know to cheer their life.

CYC. I like his after-taste at any rate.

ODY. This is the kind of god he is; he harmeth no man.

CYC. But how does a god like being housed in a wine-skin?

ODY. Put him where one may, he is content there.

CYC. It is not right that gods should be clad in leather.

ODY. What of that, provided he please thee? does the leather hurt thee?

CYC. I hate the wine-skin, but the liquor we have here I love.

ODY. Stay, then, Cyclops; drink and be merry.

CYC. Must I not give my brethren a share in this liquor?

ODY. No, keep it thyself and thou wilt appear of more honour.

CYC. Give it my friends and I shall appear of more use.

ODY. Revelling is apt to end in blows, abuse, and strife.

CYC. I may be drunk, but no man will lay hands on me for all that.

ODY. Better stay at home, my friend, after a carouse.

CYC. Who loves not revelling then is but a simpleton.

ODY. But whoso stays at home, when drunk, is wise.

CYC. What shall we do, Silenus? art minded to stay?

SIL. That I am; for what need have we of others to share our drink, Cyclops?

CYC. Well, truly the turf is soft as down with its fresh flowering plants.

SIL. (*seating himself.*) Aye, and 'tis pleasant drinking in the warm sunshine.

CYC. . . . . [1]

SIL. Come, let me see thee stretch thy carcase on the ground.

CYC. (*sitting down.*) [There then!] Why art thou putting the mixing-bowl behind me?

SIL. That no one passing by may come upon it.[2]

CYC. Nay, but thy purpose is to drink upon the sly; set it between us. (*To* ODYSSEUS.) Now tell me, stranger, by what name to call thee.

ODY. Noman. What boon shall I receive of thee to earn my thanks?

CYC. I will feast on thee last, after all thy comrades.

ODY. Fair indeed the honour thou bestowest on thy guest, sir Cyclops!

CYC. (*turning suddenly to* SILENUS.) Ho, sirrah! what art thou about? taking a stealthy pull at the wine?

SIL. No, but it kissed me for my good looks.

CYC. Thou shalt smart, if thou kiss the wine when it kisses not thee.

SIL. Oh! but it did, for it says it is in love with my handsome face.

CYC. (*holding out his cup.*) Pour in; only give me my cup full.

SIL. H'm! how is it mixed? just let me make sure. (*Takes another pull.*)

CYC. Perdition! give it me at once.

SIL. Oh, no! I really cannot, till I see thee with a crown on, and have another taste myself.

CYC. My cup-bearer is a cheat.

SIL. No really, but the wine is so luscious. Thou must wipe thy lips, though, to get a draught.

CYC. There! my lips and beard are clean now.

[1] Paley agrees with Kirchhoff in thinking a line has been lost here.

[2] *καταλάβῃ*, but one MS. has *καταβάλῃ* "upset," which Kirchhoff prefers.

SIL. Bend thine elbow gracefully, and then quaff thy cup, as thou seest me do, and as now thou seest me not. (*Burying his face in his cup.*)

CYC. Aha! what next?

SIL. I drunk it off at a draught with much pleasure.

CYC. Stranger, take the skin thyself and be my cup-bearer.

ODY. Well, at any rate the grape is no stranger to my hand.

CYC. Come, pour it in.

ODY. In it goes! keep silence, that is all.

CYC. A difficult task when a man is deep in his cups.

ODY. Here, take and drink it off; leave none.

CYC. . . . . [1]

ODY. Thou must be silent [2] and only give in when the liquor does.

CYC. God wot! it is a clever stock that bears the grape.

ODY. Aye, and if thou but swallow plenty of it after a plentiful meal, moistening thy belly till its thirst is gone, it will throw thee into slumber; but if thou leave aught behind, the Bacchic god will parch thee for it.

CYC. Ha! ha! what a trouble it was getting out! This is pleasure unalloyed: earth and sky seem whirling round together; I see the throne of Zeus and all the godhead's majesty. Kiss *thee!* no! There are the Graces trying to tempt me. I shall rest well enough with my Ganymede here; yea, by the Graces, right fairly.

SIL. What! Cyclops, am I Ganymede, Zeus's minion?

CYC. (*attempting to carry him into the cave.*) To be sure, Ganymede whom I am carrying off from the halls of Dardanus.

SIL. I am undone, my children; outrageous treatment waits me.

[1] Paley supposes a line to have been lost here in which the Cyclops asked "And how must I drink this?"

[2] *σιγῶντα*, but many editors follow Casaubon in reading *δὲ σπῶντα* "drink it off."

CHO. Dost find fault with thy lover? dost scorn him in his cups?

SIL. Woe is me! most bitter shall I find the wine ere long. [*Exit* SILENUS, *dragged away by* CYCLOPS.

ODY. Up now, children of Dionysus, sons of a noble sire, soon will yon creature in the cave, relaxed in slumber as ye see him, spew from his shameless maw the meat. Already the brand inside his lair is vomiting a cloud of smoke; and the only reason we prepared it was to burn the Cyclops' eye; so mind thou quit thee like a man.

CHO. I will have a spirit as of rock or adamant; but go inside, before my father suffers any shameful treatment; for here thou hast things ready.

ODY. O Hephæstus, lord of Ætna, rid thyself for once and all of a troublesome neighbour by burning his bright eye out. Come, Sleep, as well, offspring of sable Night, come with all thy power on the monster god-detested; and never after Troy's most glorious toils destroy Odysseus and his crew by the hands of one who recketh naught of God or man; else must we reckon Chance a goddess, and Heaven's will inferior to hers. [ODYSSEUS *re-enters the cave.*

CHO. Tightly the pincers shall grip the neck of him who feasts upon his guest; for soon will he lose the light of his eye by fire; already the brand, a tree's huge limb, lurks amid the embers charred.

Oh! come ye then and work his doom, pluck out the maddened Cyclops' eye, that he may rue his drinking. And I too fain would leave the Cyclops' lonely land and see king Bromius, ivy-crowned, the god I sorely miss. Ah! shall I ever come to that?

ODY. (*leaving the cave cautiously.*) Silence, ye cattle! I adjure you; close your lips; make not a sound! I'll not let a man of you so much as breathe or wink or clear his throat, that yon pest awake not, until the sight in the Cyclops' eye has passed through the fiery ordeal.

CHO. Silent we stand with 'bated breath.

ODY. In then, and mind your fingers grip the brand, for it is splendidly red-hot.

CHO. Thyself ordain who first must seize the blazing bar and burn the Cyclops' eye out, that we may share alike whate'er betides.

1ST HALF-CHO. Standing where I am before the door, I am too far off to thrust the fire into his eye.

2ND HALF-CHO. I have just gone lame.

1ST HALF-CHO. Why, then, thou art in the same plight as I; for somehow or other I sprained my ankle, standing still.

ODY. Sprained thy ankle, standing still?

2ND HALF-CHO. Yes, and my eyes are full of dust or ashes from somewhere or other.

ODY. These are sorry fellows, worthless as allies.

CHO. Because I feel for my back and spine, and express no wish to have my teeth knocked out, I am a coward, am I? Well, but I know a spell of Orpheus, a most excellent one, to make the brand enter his skull of its own accord, and set alight the one-eyed son of Earth.

ODY. Long since I knew thou wert by nature such an one, and now I know it better; I must employ my own friends; but, though thou bring no active aid, cheer us on at any rate, that I may find my friends emboldened by thy encouragement. [*Exit* ODYSSEUS.

CHO. That will I do; the Carian[1] shall run the risk for us; and as far as encouragement goes, let the Cyclops smoulder.

What ho! my gallants, thrust away, make haste and burn his eye-brow off, the monster's guest-devouring. Oh! singe

[1] ἐν τῷ Καρὶ κινδυνεύειν, "to run a risk in the person of the Carian." Latin "experimentum facere in corpore vili," *i.e.*, to let some one, whose life is less valuable, run the risk instead of doing so oneself. The Carians, being the earliest mercenaries, were commonly selected for any very dangerous enterprise, and so this proverb arose.

and scorch the shepherd of Ætna; twirl the brand and drag it round and be careful lest in his agony he treat thee to some wantonness.

CYC. (*bellowing in the cave.*) Oh! oh! my once bright eye is burnt to cinders now.

CHO. Sweet indeed the triumph-song; pray sing it to us, Cyclops.

CYC. (*from within.*) Oh! oh! once more; what outrage on me and what ruin! But never shall ye escape this rocky cave unpunished, ye worthless creatures; for I will stand in the entrance of the cleft and fit my hands into it thus.

[*Staggering to the entrance.*

CHO. Why dost thou cry out, Cyclops?

CYC. I am undone.

CHO. Thou art indeed a sorry sight.

CYC. Aye, and a sad one, too.

CHO. Didst fall among the coals in a drunken fit?

CYC. Noman has undone me.

CHO. Then there is no one hurting thee after all.

CYC. Noman is blinding me.

CHO. Then art thou not blind.

CYC. As blind as thou, forsooth.[1]

CHO. How, pray, could no man have made thee blind?

CYC. Thou mockest me; but where is this Noman.

CHO. Nowhere, Cyclops.

CYC. It was the stranger, vile wretch! who proved my ruin, that thou mayst understand rightly, by swilling me with the liquor he gave me.

CHO. Ah! wine is a terrible foe, hard to wrestle with.

CYC. Tell me, I adjure thee, have they escaped or are they still within?

[1] *i.e.*, "as blind as you must be if you cannot see it;" but Paley interprets "as *you* say" but not as is really the case.

CHO. Here they are ranged in silence, taking the rock to screen them.

CYC. On which side?

CHO. On thy right.

CYC. Where?

CHO. Close against the rock. Hast caught them?

CYC. Trouble on trouble! I have run my skull against the rock and cracked it.

CHO. Aye, and they are escaping thee.

CYC. This way, was it not? 'Twas this way thou saidst.

CHO. No, not this way.

CYC. Which then?

CHO. They are getting round thee on the left.

CYC. Alas! I am being mocked; ye jeer me in my evil plight.

CHO. They are no longer there; but facing thee that stranger stands.

CYC. Master of villainy, where, oh! where art thou?

ODY. Some way from thee I am keeping careful guard over the person of Odysseus.

CYC. What, a new name! hast changed thine?

ODY. Yes, Odysseus the name my father gave me. But thou wert doomed to pay for thy unholy feast; for I should have seen Troy burned to but sorry purpose, unless I had avenged on thee the slaughter of my comrades.

CYC. Woe is me! 'tis an old oracle coming true; yes, it said I should have my eye put out by thee on thy way home from Troy; but it likewise foretold that thou wouldst surely pay for this, tossing on the sea for many a day.

ODY. Go hang! E'en as I say,[1] so have I done. And

[1] There is much obscurity here. By reading either λέγεις "I have done just as thou sayest," or λέγει, *i.e.*, as the prophet says, good sense is obtained. Paley offers both suggestions.

now will I get me to the beach and start my hollow ship across the sea of Sicily to the land of my fathers.

CYC. Thou shalt not; I will break a boulder off this rock and crush thee, crew and all, beneath my throw. Blind though I be, I will climb the hill, mounting through yonder tunnel.

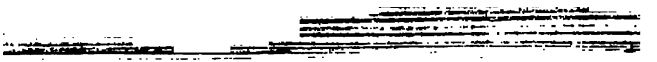
CHO. As for us, henceforth will we be the servants of Bacchus, sharing the voyage of this hero Odysseus.

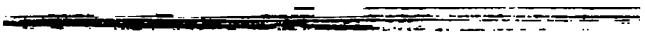




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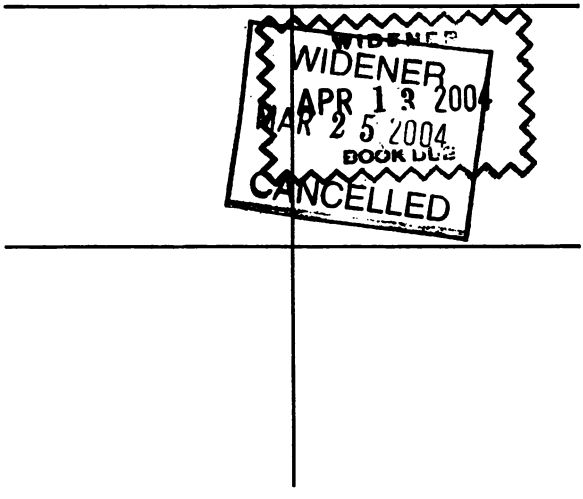




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